

To See From Your Perspective

Palestinians and Israelis Using Art, Dialogue and Narratives

to Build Mutual Understanding

Tali (Sally) Goodfriend

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Abstract

To See From Your Perspective. Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Israelis using Art, Dialogue and Personal Narratives to Build Mutual Understanding

Tali (Sally) Goodfriend

This method of teacher-as-researcher, or action research, grew out of a personal need to explore the issues of how art was being used in Israel as a means to connect with the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian population. The research began by interviewing students, teachers and the director of the photography project at Givat Haviva, Israel. The project titled “Through Others’ Eyes” brought together 20 Arab-Israeli and 20 Jewish youth for a period of one year. The project involved taking photos of each other’s homes, families and lifestyle. The aim was to help the students move away from stereotyping and prejudices and replace them with friendship. Could a project such as this achieve the desired end result? Would the high school students be able to connect with one another through the photography project? Would the process be enough to build new perceptions and help the participants begin to see from another perspective?

The Givat Haviva research encouraged me to participate in my own process of art, dialogue and personal narrative within a multi-faith, Arab, Palestinian and Jewish, dialogue group in Montreal, Canada. In bringing both projects together, I reflect upon the process and conclude with the general findings from this interactive teaching/learning experience.

Dedication

To my younger brother Ari zl, I dedicate this work, a labour of love, to honour your life and courageous spirit. The last time I saw you we had just reconnected. It was an emotional family reunion, long over due! The next morning I walked you to the bus stop in Kiryat Yovel, Jerusalem, you were headed back to the army base. Right there and then we made a promise, a pack together: the pledge was to work towards *shalom bait* or peace within our estranged family. We began the process, but all of a sudden your life ended tragically on April 13, 1994 in the suicide bus bombing in Hadera. I had to continue... Each of us does this in his or her own way. My experience has taught me that peace begins from within each individual and then extends to the family. It develops through honesty, addressing the unjust acts, being witnessed and acknowledged and hopefully in the end finding some forgiveness. My hope and dream is to see this bridge building of coexistence and peaceful relationships encompass many more families—we are after all one global village. With the world as it is today this seems like a daunting and impossible task. There is so much pain, destruction, injustice and prejudice that I wonder if it can ever end? But I do have hope because I believe in the human spirit and the ability to change and create a more dignified and respectful way of living. Through my storytelling I open my heart, extend my hands and reach out to you in peace.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my grandmother Berl, for her unconditional love and support. She gave me an incredible foundation for the first five years of my life; from this bedrock I have drawn my strength. To my large extended family living in America, Israel/Palestine and Canada: for without them this story could not be told. My three parents Simcha, Rachel and Yehudit, who passionately believed in our ability to create a better, more peaceful future for all humanity. In some ways I feel this torch has been passed on to me.

My children Benny, Rudi and Josh (Isaiah): I grew up together with you and have learned how to be a better parent and person by loving you unconditionally and sharing openly in our life experiences. Benny, you are a fun loving person, sensitive and compassionate. You know what to say to cheer me up and I can count on you. Rudi, I have learned so much from our mother-daughter relationship. It has been challenging at times but I would not change a thing because it is how we have grown together, and loved together. Josh (Isaiah), a man of few words but when you speak from the heart your wisdom and understanding shine through. I am so proud to have all of you in my life! I love you guys! Mike, our journey has been tumultuous but in the end true friendship will stand the test of time. I am fortunate to have your friendship.

My mentors are like a constant beacon in my life. Molly Knoll your friendship, encouragement and support-- your belief in my ability to share this story propelled me forward. Jason Cohen mentor, friend, nutritional, spiritual and creative advisor. You have been there for me since I arrived in Montreal. Dr Elizabeth Sacca, words cannot express

what gratitude I have for your ability to help me delve deeper than I had gone before. The road was difficult but the results astonishing! You are an amazing woman! Many thanks.

Dr Lorrie Blair, my thesis advisor, you have encouraged me from the start to use my voice and tell my story. This has been an incredible experience to pull together this body of work that represents the narrative of my life thus far, as it relates to those whom I love and those whom I have lost. Thank you for your endless support, enthusiasm and believing in me! You made the difference!

Mordechi, many years ago you told me “I’ll help you get the education you so desire”. I express this gratitude deeply and sincerely for I know how much encouragement, support, and devotion to my studies you put in. You gave from the heart. I could not have done this without you and for that I will be eternally grateful. Todah rabah!

To my female friends Belinda, Laurie, Barbara and Bobbie the bonds we have created are strong and secure. My life has been enriched by these relationships. May we be blessed to have many more adventures together!

Bradley Nayahoho, you have a special place in my life and in my heart! Let us raise a toast to good times!

Shukran Ehab! Thank you for sharing your personal views and for the technical support, scholarly advice and your patience in helping me pull this thesis together. When our paths crossed three years ago I was just beginning this research. Looking back on all that has transpired since then, I am amazed. I hope that the work we do will create positive

and beneficial change for all concerned. In-shaa-Allah! I am honoured to have you in my life and to be a part of yours.

To the participants from the MDG and the “Meeting in the Middle” art project; having this opportunity to dialogue, create artistically and share in this amazing experience over the past three years has truly enriched my life. It was a team effort all the way. Nada Sefian, shukran for your courage to walk this path with me.

To the students and staff of Givat Haviva I want to acknowledge the importance of what you are doing on the ground in Israel/Palestine, and to thank you for welcoming me into your family and giving me the opportunity to see through your yes! You are a symbol of hope.

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Chapter One

The Content Of Research

This thesis began with my goal to examine how one Israeli art centre uses art as a way to bring Arab-Israeli and Jewish high school students together. Givat Haviva¹ sponsors a photography project: “Through Others’ Eyes”. My research focused on the individual and collaborative processes expressed during in-depth interviews with five participants from the project.

A year later, I was privileged to be a participant in a group art workshop in Montreal, Quebec. This workshop was a collaboration between the Montreal Dialogue Group (MDG) and the “Full Circle Mandala Project” (FCMP). The MDG is a non-profit organization that uses dialogue to bring Arabs and Jews together for the purpose of getting to know one another. The FCMP is an ongoing art workshop conducted by Helga Schleeh, a Montreal artist. Schleeh works with Arab, Christian and Jewish children in Montreal. They create Mandala² drawings for the purpose of getting to know one another and moving beyond stereotypes and biases. The joining of the two groups, the MDG and the FCMP, created a distinct group of people who participated in a community art workshop during the summer of 2005. The art project was titled: “Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East”.

The process of writing this thesis, collecting the data and forming friendships with the people whom I have met along the way, helped me to unravel my own personal story.

¹ A Hebrew term that means cheerful or delightful hill.

² A Sanskrit word that means circumference or magic circle. This is a ritual drawing traditionally done with coloured sand. Once completed, the drawing is taken apart, to indicate the temporality of life.

Like pieces in a puzzle, I have been able to reconstruct how I arrived at this point in my life, with the strong desire to use the artistic process to heal my own wounds and to facilitate others to create a better life for themselves and those around them. My particular interest lies in the relationship between Israelis, Arabs-Israelis and Palestinians, and extends to include Arabs, Arabs-Israelis³, Palestinians and Jews living in Montreal. For this thesis, I will begin by recalling my childhood experiences and will present the important elements that are the cornerstones of why and how I am involved with art as a tool for reconciliation.

Background

The Desert

I grew up in the Arava⁴ Desert in Israel. The desert was my childhood playground and I was fortunate to have lots of freedom to explore and experience this unique landscape. The sand dunes were a rich source of fantastic stories. I would awake at the crack of dawn and go to investigate the small animal tracks left behind from their scurrying around for food and overnight adventures. Very quickly I began to identify the type of mice, lizards, snakes and beetle bugs that left their marks. My imagination would take

³ Throughout this text I will be using the term “Palestinian” to refer to the residents of the Occupied Territories, the West Bank and the Gaza strip (both Muslim and Christian) and the term “Arab-Israeli” to refer to the Arab (both Muslim and Christian) citizens of the state of Israel who carry an Israeli Passport. Although I know and respect that this second group (the Arab citizens of the state of Israel) also refer to themselves as Palestinians, I am afraid that if I use “Palestinian” for both groups, it will cause confusion for the reader and blur a distinction that is essential in many parts of the text. Arab-Israelis carry an Israeli passport and vote in Israeli elections yet they do not serve in the Israeli army and face difficulties in integrating into Israeli society compared to the Jewish citizens. There is further distinction among the non-Jewish citizens of Israel (including Druze and Bedouins, in addition to Arab-Israelis) but the details of the nature of their inclusion in the state of Israel is beyond the scope of this text. When referring to the land extending from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and from the Lebanese border to the Sinai border (including the State of Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) I will refer to it as Israel/Palestine out of respect for both the Israelis and Palestinians who both live in it and each group’s particular – and sometimes conflicting--reference to it.

⁴ Israel’s southern desert valley. Part of the Syrian-African rift east of the Jordanian border.

over and I would create little vignettes. I feel that my artistic beginnings can be traced to that same time period, when I was around 7 years old. Along with creating stories, I began to use my creative expression in various forms and with different media. I recall drawing in the sand dunes located just on the outskirts of the barbed wire fence that protected our small kibbutz⁵ from the possible infiltration of *fedayeen*⁶ who came across the Jordanian border under the protection of nightfall. I walked in the wadi⁷, collecting coloured sand from the shallow walls and then used this sand to make sand bottles. The wadis provided an endless supply of dry clay slabs that I collected and hauled back to the kibbutz. I crushed the clay and sieved the particles, mixing the clay with water to make a malleable substance. This clay would be used to create animals, masks and small bowls. I

The '60s brought international volunteers-- individuals arriving from exotic locations like the Far East and India, with their new artistic ideas. They taught me how to batik, tie-dye, silkscreen, and more. These experiences of creating and being part of an artistic community, coupled with the beauty of the desert, helped to shape my love for people, art and nature. Important elements like these intertwine like the weft and warp of fabric and have created the underpinnings of who I am today.

My Bedouin Friend

When I was 13, I experienced my first encounter with terrorism and death. Its impact is still with me today. A nomadic Bedouin tribe lived (and still does today) near the vicinity

⁵ Israeli collective farm or settlement characterized by shared communal living.

⁶ Armed Palestinian militants constituted from the refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. They made efforts to infiltrate and strike against Israeli towns, infrastructures and citizens. The literal translation: one who is ready to sacrifice his life.

⁷ Dry riverbed or gully.

of my kibbutz. Although the tribe would move around in the desert, tending to the goats and camel herds in search of better grazing grounds, they managed to send some of their children to our one-room schoolhouse called Tagel Arava⁸. As a result of learning together, we children became friends and our families became close. The incident involved another Arab from Jordan who infiltrated the border one night and murdered one of the younger Bedouin boys, Awwad, *rahimahu-Allah*⁹, while he was out alone in the desert tending the goats. The Israeli army and police came to the conclusion that the murder was revenge because the father of Awwad was a double agent spying for Israel and Jordan. They came to this conclusion based on the brutality and type of murder and the circumstance. The murderer had sat down by the fire with Awwad and probably even shared some tea with him before he killed him. Since I could speak some Arabic, and personally knew Awwad, I was chosen to go with my father and Awwad's father, Ali, to identify the body. I served as a translator for Ali. I was also allowed to participate in my friend's burial procedure and ceremony. This sad experience was imbedded in me, and my relationship with Awwad's family grew strong over the years. (See Appendix 3 for story).

Abuse, Arranged Marriage, Religious Coercion

Around the same time that my friend Awwad was murdered, when I was 13 and a half, my father sexually abused me. As the trust between us was shattered and the fear towards my father mounted, I began reaching out to other trusted adults, like some of the volunteers living on my kibbutz. I began by talking about what had happened to me. By

⁸ Tagel is a Hebrew word that means to rejoice. The name means the Arava Desert rejoices.

⁹ An Arabic expression meaning, "May God forgive him" that is usually used in conjunction with the name of a deceased person.

the shocked and appalled reactions I received from others, I began to realize this had not been my fault and the parent/child relationship had been severely violated. In addition to the abuse, the irony was that my father appointed himself as the stern spiritual leader in our kibbutz and, as such, demanded respect and a cult-like devotion from the members. He considered himself a Zionist¹⁰ and a messianic Jew¹¹. I was growing up in a patriarchal society, where the personal boundaries had not been respected. This aspect, coupled with my father's belief that girls should marry young and have many children to fulfill the Biblical commandment of "Be fruitful and multiply", led to my arranged marriage. I was introduced to my future husband at the age of 15, but this idea of marriage was not one I readily embraced. I fought it off for as long as I could. My plans were to finish school and then serve in the Israeli army¹². It took my parents close to a year to convince me to get married. Their pressure intensified and the brainwashing resulted in me reluctantly conceding. The marriage took place in the summer of my 16th year. Then came the parental pressure for me to conceive. With my parents' relentless nagging and pressure, it was a never-ending battle to which I eventually succumbed. By the time I was 22 I had three beautiful children. A few years later, when I was still married and raising my young children, my parents became even more controlling; they were on a religious quest that became more and more fanatic. My husband and I felt compelled to leave the kibbutz with our family. In 1983, about one year after I left the

¹⁰ A movement for the national renaissance and political independence of the Jewish people in Israel, which emerged towards the end of the 19th Century. The belief that Jews are not merely a religious group, but also a nation, entitled to their own state; today, a Zionist is someone who supports the State of Israel as a Jewish state.

¹¹ A belief that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah the Jews are waiting for. And that he will return during the second coming and rebuild the third Temple in Jerusalem.

¹² It is compulsory for every Jewish Israeli woman or man at the age of 18 to join the Israeli army. Women serve two years, men three. The exceptions are orthodox men and women or women who are married.

kibbutz, I went before the regional court in Jerusalem, Israel giving the account of my sexual abuse, the arranged marriage and the religious coercion that I had experienced. This court case helped to set the record straight, satisfy my sense of justice and initiate my healing process.

New Beginnings

In 1985, I decided, along with my husband and family, to leave Israel and build a new life in Montreal, Quebec. In the supportive and close-knit academic environment of the Early Childhood Education Department at Vanier College, I began to share my stories, once again, with some of my professors. My primary goal was to finally get a formal education, for this was a dream that I put on hold in order to bring up my children.

Through the friendships that were formed, I received guidance on specific books that could be helpful and suggestions that I should look into some kind of therapy. I took the advice. The therapeutic process took more than 10 years with many different kinds of therapy sessions before I could return home to Israel and begin the process of *shalom bait*¹³ with my parents. This was a very difficult but necessary first step for me, going back and beginning to reconnect with my mom and dad. It took incredible courage for me to make that first phone call and then meet in their desert home. I was so nervous and uncomfortable. I did not know what to expect. Little did I know how important the timing of this meeting and reunion with my parents and brothers would inevitably turn out to be.

¹³ Creating family peace.

Ari Pearlmutter זל¹⁴

In the spring of 1994, shortly after reconciling with my parents and two estranged younger brothers, Ari and Dari, a Palestinian suicide bomber on a bus in Hadera¹⁵, Israel killed my 19-year-old brother, Ari. At that time, Ari was a paratrooper in the Israeli army. This was a painful and devastating time. I had only just reconnected with my brother Ari, in 1993, after many years of being apart. I could not believe he was dead. Taken in the prime of his youth. I felt deep sorrow and a sense of being tragically robbed of an opportunity to finally begin to know my brother as a young man, full of hopes and dreams. I kept recalling the last time I saw Ari, in Jerusalem. It was early morning; I walked him to the bus stop in Kiriat Yovel. He was on his way back to the army base. As we walked, he told me how important it was for us to help our family make amends. I felt close to him. We shared this common goal and the language of *shalom bait*. We would work together on bringing this large family of nine brothers and sister together again. But, our dream had just been shattered.

I immediately went back to Israel for the *shiva*¹⁶. Along with the hundreds of mourners, the neighbouring Bedouin family came to console my family. That very first night upon my arrival in the desert, Fraza, the mother of Awwad, came walking toward me from out of the dark desert. No words were needed, and we embraced and held each other tight. I cried and Fraza held my trembling body in the warmth of her loving embrace. She was

¹⁴ זל is a Hebrew abbreviation that means “of blessed memory”; it is written after the name of the deceased person.

¹⁵ A town in West Israel, near the Mediterranean Sea. See Appendix 6 for location on the map.

¹⁶ Seven-day mourning period.

there for me, as I had been for her, many years ago. Words could not truly express the power of this connection and friendship and how I viewed my Bedouin friends.

Life-Changing Events

The impact of these life-changing events has significantly influenced what I want to do with the rest of my life. The ongoing situation in the Middle East also provides the impetus for the direction and focus of my work in art education. Personally, I believe that violence begets violence, and it is not the way to solve problems. In my family, I have been the peacemaker: the one who, time after time, returns to make amends, and tries to heal the past. I have chosen this, at times difficult, path of reconciliation and forgiveness and extended it into my family and community. This did not happen overnight and as my story will attest, many were the times I could have given up or chosen another path, a path of hatred, anger, disbelief and despair. I hope as an art teacher to apply what I have learned and extend this even further and reach a larger community. I also hope that art accompanied by dialogue will be part of the solution, small as it may be, in restoring tolerance and open the lines of creativity and communication between Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews living in the Middle East or abroad. If this can be achieved, only one person at a time, so be it.

Research Interests

This research is an attempt to take what I have experienced, and link it to the experiences of others who are using art to bring Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jewish youth together for a shared experience in the hope of moving beyond the existing and ongoing conflicts. There are several reasons why I chose to study how art is used as a medium to bring

people together, either for reconciliation or to build a friendship. In my specific case, I am referring to the relationship between Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews living in Israel and Montreal.

The first reason stems from my 20 years of working in the field of Early Childhood Education. I used creativity in all aspects of the programs that I planned. It was always important for me to develop a program that incorporated the individual child's needs along with those of the group. Multiculturalism and improving social relationships were a high priority. I was concerned with helping children learn how to negotiate and solve problems effectively. My experience taught me that art was one tool I could use to achieve my goals, be they personal, academic or professional.

The second, as a mature student enrolled in the BFA program at Concordia, University I began to use the creative process as one way of dealing with the loss of my childhood Bedouin friend Awwad, at the hands of another Arab and the death of my brother Ari by a Palestinian suicide bomber. I did not begin the BFA program with this focus or goal in mind but rather the process of making art helped the issues to surface. I began to address and relate to what had happened and, via this process, I began to feel a sense of understanding, meaning and closure. This was a process that evolved over a period of five years and it involved lots of soul searching, art making and encouragement and support from professors and students alike.

The third reason stems from my involvement with a pilot project, part of a course requirement in the Masters in Art Education at Concordia, that involved the use of art to bring one Palestinian-Canadian and one Jewish-Canadian student together in a shared art

experience for the purpose of using art and dialogue to get to know one another. The project involved more artwork than dialogue and the students commented on this aspect and felt that it would have been beneficial to talk about the process and discuss the issues. This was my conclusion as well and I decided to use more dialogue in the next art project that involved Arabs, Palestinians and Jews.

The fourth reason is my ongoing involvement with the Montreal Dialogue Group. This is a non-profit organization working out of Montreal, established in 2004. The aim of this group is to facilitate dialogue between Arabs and Jews living in Montreal. I went to my first meeting just before I left for Israel to begin my research for this thesis. Upon returning I felt a sense of obligation, both personal and social. Since I was truly interested in coexisting and understanding the complex issues between the Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Israelis, and extending this to Arabs, Palestinians and Jews living in Montreal, I felt that I would benefit by participating in a multicultural dialogue group. I wanted to be more involved than merely researching the effects that art could bring to opening up the doors to understanding and learning about each other. I wanted to be involved on a one-to-one basis and learn firsthand how people from both sides were feeling and thinking. Living in Montreal, the participants of the MDG are somewhat removed from the daily situation in Israel and Palestine. Yet taking the pulse of the participants in the MDG seemed like a good place to start! Concluding on this positive note, the MDG was awarded the “2005 YMCA Canada Peace Medal” by the YMCA of Grater Montreal (See Appendix 5).

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the personal journey of growing up in the desert, having unique childhood experiences, making friends with the Bedouins and the death of one of their children, Awwad. I elaborated on my religious upbringing and the arranged marriage that followed. Due in part to religious coercion, I uprooted my family in 1982, and left the small desert community, attempting to create a new life in Jerusalem, Israel. This paved the way to our immigrating to Montreal, Canada, in 1985.

I acknowledged the death of my brother at the hands of a suicide bomber and the impact it had on my family and me. All of these experiences led to my research interests and the path of art, reconciliation and working towards mutual understanding between people. In Chapter Two, the literature review, I will elaborate on the art projects and activities that used art in various ways to bring students together to create a better mutual understanding.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

The literature used for this thesis comes from a cluster of project reports on activities that used art as a means to help students build friendships and mutual understanding. Literature related to my topic, art as a medium for conflict resolution between Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews, was scant.

I began by looking at programs that used art as a way to bring students who were experiencing short- or long- term conflict due to religious, political, social or cultural differences together for the purpose of building positive human relationships. More specifically and because of my background, I looked for those that attempted to bring Palestinians and Israelis together for the sake of reconciliation and a more peaceful coexistence in the land that they share, Israel/Palestine.

The Various Art Projects: Photography, Mandalas, and Dialogue

Wendy Ewald, an American educator, first taught photography to school-age children in Appalachian communities as a means to enhance literacy, and confront prejudices and stereotyping. She felt that by giving children the opportunity to get to know one another, this would lead to a better understanding and to seeing the other as a friend. Ewald encouraged the children to reveal their home life and share it in class and within their community. She has pursued this line of work for the past 30 years and traveled to places like rural India and the Colombian Andes. The next photo project comes from Becky Wai-Ling Packard and Katherine L. Ellison and Maria R. Sequenzia, from Massachusetts, USA; they used photo-interviews with adolescent girls to investigate their

hopes and fears. Tom Anderson from Florida State University worked with his students on creating a mandala peace project. Another project used dialogue as a way to make human connections between Arab-Israelis and Jewish youths. It is part of an educational program called “Children Teaching Children”, established in 1987 and working out of Givat Haviva Israel.

Wendy Ewald, Art Education and Photography “I Wanna Take Me a Picture”

Wendy Ewald began working with children and photography very soon after her graduation from university in 1975. She was a young art teacher fresh out of college with a desire to work with children and photography. She began her teaching in the Appalachian communities in Eastern Kentucky.

The book “I Wanna Take Me A Picture” by Wendy Ewald and Alexandra Lightfoot, gives instructions on how to teach photography and writing to children. It is based on Ewald’s extensive experience of teaching photography to children in the United States and in different parts of the world. Ewald recalls why she became interested in photography and education and how this led to Ewald and Lightfoot writing an instructional book on the topic:

It [the book] grew out of an attempt to address what I saw as the need to attend to our neglected physical and visual surroundings, and the need we all feel to articulate and communicate something relevant about our personal and communal lives. *I Wanna Take Me a Picture* evolved gradually from 30 years of working with children... of thinking about how we learn, and how we express ourselves with images (8).

Ewald and Lightfoot believe that the students need both images and words to create their story:

It's unlikely that the young people would have written what they did without pictures to prompt them and the pictures would have been difficult to decipher without the stories to accompany them (11).

Ewald's work with the students is a combination of visual images with narrative. The process is important, as is the end result of sharing with each other what they have created.

Wendy Ewald's Other Projects "Black Self/White Self" and "White Girls' Alphabet"

In 1994 Ewald worked on a photography project titled "Black Self/White Self". In this project, Ewald worked with girls from two different racial groups, who were integrating into one school system. One group was predominantly white and the other black. The pre-existing racial tension was mounting in the school. Ewald asked the students to create a visual self-portrait and then reverse the roles and create a portrait as a member of the other race, in order to see from another perspective (Berger, 253). "By encouraging young people to think empathetically-- white kids imagined themselves as black, black kids as white-- Ewald helped her students to confront their racial prejudices by understanding each other's differences as well as similarities" (Berger, 53).

In 2002, Ewald used photography to work with white female students in Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts in order to explore the relationship between gender, race and whiteness. The series was called "White Girls Alphabet" and it was based on the

previous project titled: “Black Self/ White Self”. In this second project Ewald was demonstrating how our language influences the way we perceive our world, our biases and preferences (Berger, 53).

Show and Tell: Photo-Interviews with Urban Adolescent Girls

The “Show and Tell” project conducted by Packard, Ellison and Sequenzia used photo-interviews as a means to investigate the hopes and fears of urban adolescent girls who were actively participating in their community organization (1). The implications from this study revealed:

In their annotations and interview responses, the participants talked about innocence lost, hopes and faith in the future, their struggle for freedom of expression, and their awareness of their neighbourhood context – from their own perspective – adding richness to the cases (Packard, Ellison, Sequenzia,14).

Using photography along with the individual stories and interviews opened up a new method of communication for the students and allowed them to express themselves in two media, in both photography and writing, revealing who they were and what was important to them. They were active participants in control of the images and text that they chose to share with others.

Why Use Photography?

The advantage of using photography with children is that it can be done practically by any child, any place or time. Ewald and Lightfoot comment on the importance of taking pictures within a multiracial classroom; this was in an urban setting where the students were coming from diverse multicultural groups:

I realized that photography provided a much-needed opportunity for the students to bring their home lives into the school. The children had never seen each other's neighbourhood, certainly not each other's homes or families. They were essentially strangers to each other. When the students brought back pictures of their families and communities, each child tried to explain what was going on in the picture, and the others eagerly asked questions (11).

The use of photography helped the students to get to know one another through a very basic process of taking photos of meaningful objects or events in their daily lives and relating these stories back to their classmates. It was a starting point of getting to know one another.

According to Stuart Richmond, the value of using the medium of photography is:

Students, under guidance, make pictures and find out what happens when certain things are done, but also find out about themselves, discovering in practice previously unrealized attitudes, preferences, imaginative capabilities, pleasures and satisfactions". He continues ... "whether someone is seeking to show the beauty of a forest, hardship of the working class, or repressive dimensions of race and gender, creative art-making moves us in the direction of greater awareness, freedom and personhood". (17)

Students are given the opportunity to open up to new insights, perspectives and other ways of seeing the world. By doing so, they are more self-aware and begin the process of seeing from another's point of view, one that might be very different from their own.

Tom Anderson Mandalas, Constructing Peace Through Art

In the spring of 2001, Florida State University opened its doors to 10 Tibetan Buddhist Monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery. They were invited to create a sand

mandala with Tom Anderson's art students. The process of creating a mandala takes both concentration and time to complete. Once the creation is finished, part of the ritual practice is to take the content of the mandala and reintegrate it back into the ecology. The intention of creating this specific mandala in Florida was to ask for world peace and blessings for the community (Mandala-Constructing, 1). For the students, Anderson saw the goal as "...reconstructing-- caring, cooperative, and self-reflective community through art" (Mandala-Constructing, 1). The students created a group mandala on a large square piece of masonite that had been painted blue. They were encouraged to bring in materials for the mandala that were symbolic to them. The creation process had several steps and the final one was the dismantling of the mandala. Anderson and his students released the content of their mandala into the river and watched as the water carried away the flowers and other organic materials that they had used.

According to Anderson,

The process is as much about learning others' values and beliefs as about art. There may also be insights regarding the energy collected and released in the mandala and its power to change one's attitude from 'I and mine' to 'we and ours' (Art for Life, 223).

Richard Anderson asks, "What if other people... live in different realities, traverse different worlds, and believe that the universe around them (and within them) is fundamentally different than the world I inhabit?" (Calliope's 95)

In support of Tom Anderson's beliefs that art can be instrumental in helping us see from a different perspective and deal constructively with others, Valerie Clark comments,

The value of arts lies in their ability to depict and explore universal human experience in ways that enable people to recognize that they are capable of facing and working through such life-changing events (119).

Clark is referring to the loss of loved ones and working through the bereavement process. But this could apply equally to other forms of community loss through acts of terrorism, suicide bombing and the back and forth retaliations that ensue as a result, between both groups. This creates tension and hostility all around, as well as a feeling of hopelessness and despair.

“Children Teaching Children” is an Educational Peace Building Program from Givat Haviva, Israel.

“Children Teaching Children” (CTC) is an educational program that began in 1987 in Givat Haviva, Israel. The basic premise: “ ... a tool to accelerate the educational process for each side to learn about itself and its attitudes towards the other side” (People Building Peace, 1999). This is primarily achieved through school meetings in mixed groups that use the medium of dialogue.

When one is engaged in dialogue, one must invest a great deal of emotional and intellectual energy. The outcome is never predictable, because in a true dialogue neither side’s agenda takes precedence over the others (People Building Peace, 1999).

Time and time again the importance of seeing from another’s perspective has been emphasized in trying to solve conflicts.

“Windows”

Windows is a grassroots organization that develops projects/activities between Israelis, Arab-Israelis, Palestinian youth and adults. Windows has two headquarters. The Friendship Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel established in 1991, and the Friendship Centre in *Tulkarem*¹⁷ in the West Bank established in 2003. They have many projects that involve youth from both the Arab-Israeli, Palestinian and Jewish sectors. The projects range from art, writing, creating a youth magazine to joint summer camps and so on. The projects and ventures also include the adults and the communities they live in.

Windows is a joint organization of Jews and Palestinians from both sides of the Green Line¹⁸. It was established in 1991 with the aim to promote acquaintances, understanding and conciliation between people from both nations, through educational and cultural programs, media and art. We believe that in order to reach a just and lasting peace, and to advance the process of conciliation in our region, it is important to internalize democratic values and human rights, and to deepen mutual understanding of the other. (win-peace.org)

In January 1995, the Arab-Israelis, Palestinian and Jewish youth who participated in the “Windows” project created a Hebrew-Arabic magazine. It incorporates articles, personal stories, poems and artwork. The main purpose, according to Ruti Atsmon, the founder and director of Windows Tel Aviv Friendship Centre, is to provide an opportunity for the children to get together in a shared experience, learn and have a better understanding about each other and the country they are growing up in. (win-peace.org)

¹⁷ A Palestinian city located in the West Bank. See Appendix 6 for location on the map

¹⁸ The 1949 Armistice Line, today known, as the ‘Green Line’, was established at the end of the War of Independence. In 1949, all of the Arab countries that invaded Israel signed a cease-fire agreement that specified the interim borders between Israel and the Arab states. See Appendix 6 for location on map.

Folding Together using origami

This is a project that uses the Oriental art of paper folding, origami, as a means to build relationships between Israeli and Palestinian school-age children. Miri Golan, founded the Israeli Origami Center (IOC) in 1991. In 1999, Golan volunteered to teach origami in the Palestinian refugee camps of Balata and Taibe. In 2000, Golan began an informal course in Ramallah on the West Bank for students of the West Bank university of Ber Zeit. They met for a period of 13 weeks and then the second *Intifada*¹⁹ erupted. The origami course stopped but some of the Palestinian students maintained their relationship with Golan. The teachers went on to teach origami in two Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem.

In February 2004-5, the IOC received a grant that helped them run four ‘folding together’ courses. Each course had 20 Israeli and 20 Palestinian students between the ages of 9 and 12. The year-long program worked on creating origami projects but also dealt with the issues that the students and their families were dealing with. The issues came from the emotional, educational, religious and political arenas (Foldingtogether.org).

Chapter Summary

This literature review has brought together a blend of diverse projects that demonstrates how the arts, dialogue and the sharing of personal narratives can play a role in educating towards self-awareness and the ability to see from another’s perspective. This process can lead the way to feelings of acknowledgement, acceptance and legitimization. In the following Chapter Three, the research method and the research site will be discussed.

¹⁹ The second Intifada, also called the al-Aqsa Intifada, was a wave of violence that began in September 2000 between the Palestinian and the Israelis. “Intifada” is the Arabic word for “uprising”.

Chapter Three

Methods of Study

Introduction

The objective of this research was to learn from my own personal experiences or those of others how art can be used to commence dialogue, foster an open-mindedness and tolerance, and perhaps help to build communication that would then lead to coexistence between two groups dealing with conflict issues—Jews, Israelis, Arab-Israelis and Palestinians. As an art educator, my interests were to enhance my own understanding and the way I teach. This research involved traveling to Israel and finding out how one art program, at the Art Centre of Givat Haviva, uses photography to bring Arab-Israelis and Jewish high school students together in a shared experience that aims at fostering understanding and building friendly relationships. Givat Haviva, Israel is located in the Sharon Valley, in central Israel. The campus grounds are spacious and they extend over an area of approximately 150 *dunam* or 37 acres. There are a variety of departments: Jewish Arab Centre for Peace, Art Centre, Peace Library, “Moreshet”²⁰ Centre for Study and Research of the Holocaust, “Yad Yaari”²¹ Archives, Woman’s Centre and the International Department.

The Givat Haviva Educational Institute in Israel was founded in 1949. It is the National Education Centre for the Kibbutz Movement which is a federation consisting of 83 Kibbutzim throughout Israel. Their goal is to educate towards “... peace, democracy,

²⁰ Hebrew term that means heritage.

²¹ Hebrew term that means the hand of Yaari.

coexistence and social solidarity; and to foster greater understanding between different groups of Israeli society and among nations”(http:// www.givathaviva.org.il/english/).

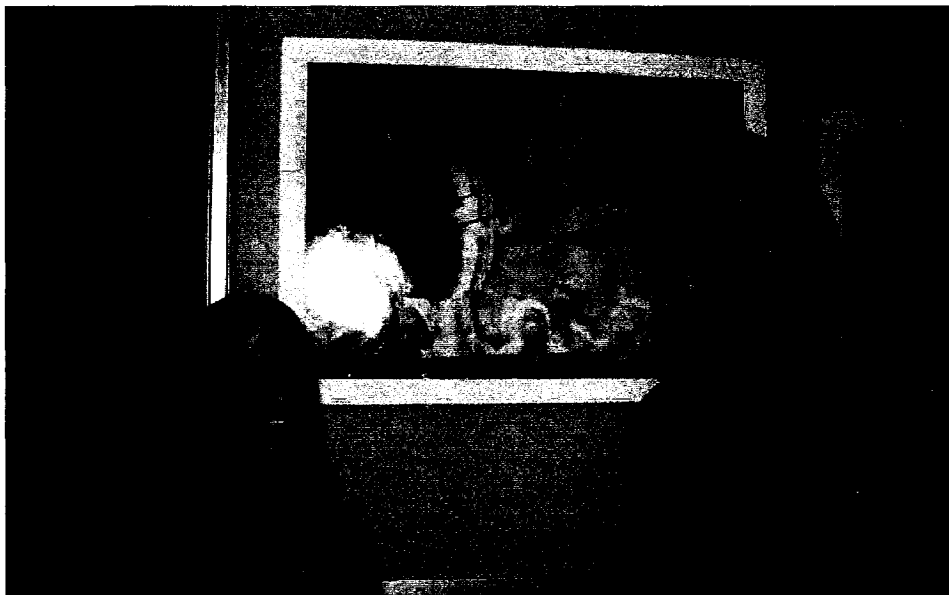
Givat Haviva has offered innovative programs for children and adults for the past 50 years. Because of the diverse ethnicities, nationalities and religions residing in Israel, the underlying philosophy of Givat Haviva is to build true democracy, based on equal rights for all citizens. Its mission is to “...connect with those pressing issues that confront Israel’s collective conscience: to strive to maintain the principals of democracy, compromise and dialogue, resisting the pattern of hatred and intolerance throughout society (www.givathaviva.org).

The Givat Haviva Art Centre views art as a tool that helps to:

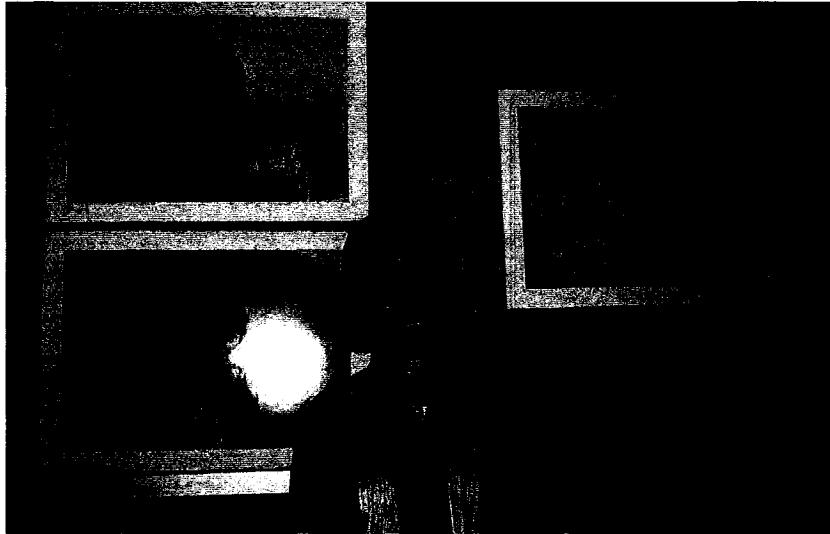
...bridge the gaps and cultures. Art is an open language that creates aesthetics, it is available, it creates a new human basis, a spiritual language comprising of a connection between individuals and groups. The guiding line is always the personal, humanistic, while bringing the margins closer and the possibilities to relate to every person as they are in an equal manner. The art centre at Givat Haviva strives to integrate arts with theoretical social activity, to advance kibbutz, urban and Arab populations in the fields of plastic arts, to serve as an advanced seminar for young artists of high school age and above (www.givathaviva.org).

Etti Amram, the director of Givat Haviva Art Centre, visiting Montreal with the traveling exhibition “Through Others’ Eyes” in the fall of 2004, read the following statement on the program’s goals to the audience at the Saidye Bronfman Centre:

Givat Haviva is a learning centre that focuses on different areas including the Arab/Jewish centre for peace, art centre, Holocaust centre and other centres that deal with living in Israel. When people first meet, their initial impression of each other comes from eye contact. When people don't know each other, they have concerns about themselves and the people they are meeting. Various emotions are in play such as fear and caution. We are checking each other out. "Through Others' Eyes" is a unique project that attempts to bring people together from different cultures through the art of photography. The camera is the other eye through which we see. The project includes visiting and photographing the homes of all the participants. This enables every participant to present him/herself in his or her own private world and to look at the other in his or her natural environment. Don't look at each photo only as a work of art but as a medium that enables the development of a process whereby people are able to get to know and understand each other. With more understanding between people and with people understanding each other, the circle of peaceful coexistence expands. The clouds, the bleakness are exposed just as the light through the camera lens exposes and captures the subjects. There is understanding. There is light.



"Through Others' Eyes", Saidye Bronfman Centre 2004 (Figure 1)



“Through Others’ Eyes”, Saidye Bronfman Centre 2004 (Figure 2)



Standing in front of photos of Hanan Abu Fanna and Tzlil Sharuki,
“Through Others’ Eyes”, Saidye Bronfman Centre 2004 (Figure 3)

(All three photos by Jean François Frappier)

The Givat Haviva Art Centre was recommended to me by acquaintances from Israel, who lived in Montreal at the time. They knew first-hand about the goals and objectives of this program that uses photography to bring Arab and Jewish high school students together for a joint project. My friends felt that my research objectives would be met by observing and learning about the art process at the Givat Haviva Art Centre. This first-hand, personal knowledge proved to be invaluable as it helped me to establish a relationship with the director of the art centre, Etti Amram. I decided to travel to Israel and spend as much time as possible at the centre so that I would gain a better understanding of how they were using the art process to bring students together.

Access to the Site and Participants

Receiving an invitation to visit the Givat Haviva Art Centre was not difficult due to the introduction from some Israeli friends (living in Montreal) and Shaul Kochavi who was my initial contact in Montreal. Mr. Kochavi represents the centre abroad. Upon his return to Israel, after our meeting in the winter of 2003, he introduced the topic of my thesis to Etti Amram and that is where the research story began.

I made my first visit to Givat Haviva in the spring of 2004. The students were in their final month of the project “Through Others’ Eyes”. The director, Etti Amram, was concerned about me interviewing the students. She told me that the group as a whole had just gone through several sets of interviews and she worried that they were getting tired and overwhelmed by all the presentations and outsider involvement and the pressure they created. She wanted the students to have time to focus on their work and, from past experience, she knew that the last month tends to be very strenuous and demanding.

Finishing the photos, developing them, writing the script for the play and finally putting the exhibition together made for a stressful time. I assured her that my presence would be as unobtrusive as possible and that I would follow her lead and only go as far as she felt the student could go. There were some days upon arriving at the centre that I realized, due to scheduling and workload, I was not going to get the interviews that I had counted on. So I got back on the train and headed to my sister's place in Tel Aviv. With lots of patience and persistence, I would call back and reschedule. In the end, I did come away with the interviews and a deeper sense of connection to those with whom I came in contact. The Givat Haviva art group consisted of 20 students. Due to time constraints, I was only permitted to interview two students from the group.

Data Collection Procedure

To gain insight, I used in-depth personal reflection interviews. I chose this method for collecting data because, according to John Johnson, in-depth interviews ...“ commonly involve one-on-one, face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and an informant, and seeks to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure” (103). In this study, five participants from the group were asked to share their experience. The participants I interviewed consisted of two students (Arab-Israeli and Jewish), two art teachers (Arab-Israeli and Jewish) and the director of the program (Jewish). From each participant, I was able to acquire a basic level of understanding of the process they go through during the year-long photography workshop and how each defines the success of the project. Although they had their own definitions of success, the most important to them were the friendships that were made along the way and the final photo exhibition. I looked at the program's general philosophy and pedagogy on tolerance education with

more of a focus on the photography program. I asked about the type of art projects and art processes used in Givat Haviva as a medium to foster understanding/tolerance between the Jewish and Arab high school students from the nearby communities who attend this one-year program. I explained to the participants that if they agreed, their identities and interviews would not be kept confidential and the recorded interviews would be used as part of my thesis and later on be published. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form before we began the formal interview (See Appendix 1). During the interviews, I used a questionnaire that I had developed based on examples from the book by Dorothy Strachan titled "Questions that Work".

The questions were open-ended and followed a progression from simple to more complex in the hope of stimulating and guiding the conversation. I did not want to begin with the more difficult topic of the conflict but rather gradually build up to it if the opportunity presented itself.

I conducted one meeting with each participant. The interviews were recorded on a video camera and conducted one-on-one at the art centre at Givat-Haviva. The main goal of the interview was to find out how the art centre created the specific program and how the teachers and students went about addressing the topic of the conflict in Israel. The questions asked during the interview focused on the art process and the conflict. The interviews were conducted in Hebrew because all of the participants felt comfortable speaking in Hebrew.

Keeping the interview friendly was an important element in the process, as it was vital to gain the participant's trust so that they felt comfortable expressing their viewpoints.

According to John Hopkins, “When a researcher begins an interview, he or she behaves in a friendly and interested manner so as to help build trust and good rapport. An in-depth interview begins slowly, with small talk (chit-chat), explains the purpose of the research, and commonly begins with simple planned questions...” (109). It was important to consider the ethics when conducting the in-depth interview. It is necessary to protect both the persons being interviewed and the community being researched. I provided the participants with a signed, written declaration that they had the right to discontinue the interview at any time, and to review the data, and if they wish, not to be identified by name or position for their safety and that of their community. Johnson states, ...” a researcher or interviewer would feel obligated to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the individuals who have cooperated in the research from any misuse of the research they have shared” (115). It is likewise important not to offend the community in which the research is being conducted. This was achieved by respecting their religious beliefs, auspicious days and dress code. In addition, it was helpful being knowledgeable and sensitive to the history of the community and the background of the people.

Reducing Bias and Preconceptions

I have tried to reduce possible biases by going into this research with an open mind and deep desire to understand and learn from others. There was a possibility that inference would be made incorrectly, or that I might not understand or ‘hear’ what was being said, because of my interpretation, views and possible biases. John Johnson states that among the limitations is the possibility that the in-depth interviewer does not ‘hear’ what the participant is saying, but rather ‘hears’ what they want or are prepared to ‘hear’ (106). It was possible that I had tucked away inside of me some personal biases and perhaps some

stereotypes concerning the Arab-Israelis. Having grown up in Israel, it was not uncommon to hear derogatory statements about Arab-Israelis, and vice versa. My feelings toward the Arab-Israeli population were, of course, mixed. Having grown up with Arab-Israeli Bedouin children as my classmates and friends, I believe that I see Arab-Israelis as people first and I do not judge them based on the colour of their skin, their religious beliefs or ethnicity. Another concern I had at the beginning of the research was how it would impact me personally. In 1994, in Hadera, Israel, my brother was killed in a suicide bus bombing. I realized I must be very careful and aware of my own emotions and how they could impact the course of the interviews. That being said, I felt this inner motivation to try to bring about positive change. Perhaps by doing this research I could find a way to help others and myself work towards a peaceful solution, one that both people, Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews would be happy with. I wanted to understand and I wanted to work on solutions²².

Outline Procedure and Data Analysis

In-depth interviewing uses qualitative methods to analyze the data collected. My goal is to research the pedagogy and art centre philosophy and the type of art projects used. My particular interest is in the way the process of art and the specific art projects are used in creating a human connection between the students and in fostering tolerance between the two diverse groups.

²² Solutions that would stem from a more balanced and in-depth understanding of the conflict, its origins and how it is being dealt with by grassroots and established organizations like Givat Haviva. Solutions that would attempt to build bridges for mutual understanding, acknowledgement and reconciliation.

The raw data consists of collected field-notes, recorded in-depth interviews, and my own journaling. The field-notes and excerpts from my personal journals were used to limit my own biases (See Appendix 3). The videotaped in-depth interviews I used as a means to evaluate what the participants were telling me, in relation to the research questions.

According to David Hopkins the main points in this process are collection, validation, interpretation and action (133).

Validation is the next step. “The second stage in the process concerns validation of the hypothesis” (Hopkins133). The data I collected was validated through the help of other professionals in the field. I gave the transcript to professionals and friends who are knowledgeable in this area of research. Hopkins states, “Another widely used strategy for ensuring validity is having key respondents review drafts of one’s research report. This can be either the people involved in the research (one’s colleagues or students), or those knowledgeable about the situation you are inquiring into”(136).

The next stage in the process is interpretation. From the collected data, I began to find the meaning and significance it contained. Did the project meet the expected goals? Did new insights appear? Did the art process prove beneficial as a medium to foster tolerance between the two groups? What else have I learned from the research? The final stage in the research is action. What am I going to do with the information and knowledge I have acquired? According to Hopkins, “Having created meaning out of the research data, the teacher-researcher is in a position to plan for future action”²³ (137). I want to learn from

²³ The “future action” as I see it could take the form of personal and professional involvement. This could be in the form of educational programs, group workshops, dialogue groups and creative long-term projects that incorporate narrative writing, theatre productions and other forms of creative art.

this research, and to enhance my personal and professional knowledge in the field of art education, with an emphasis on the end goal of tolerance and new ways of relating to others through art. I strongly believe that learning from other professionals in the field, like the Givat Haviva Art Centre, provides a rich body of theoretical and practical information.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three has described the method of study used for this research. This study uses in-depth interviews and incorporates my own personal narrative. I have discussed what motivated me to pursue this line of research and why I traveled to Israel. I give an overview as to how I made the initial contacts and how I collected the data. These included formal and informal interviews, participant observation and documentary photography and video. The research was conducted over a three-month period that extended to the fall when Givat Haviva sent representatives to Montreal for an art exhibition. I was privileged to be Etti Amram's host and to be involved in the set-up of the exhibition that was held at the Saidye Bronfman Centre, November 2004. In the following chapter, I will focus on the participants' interviews.

Chapter Four

The Givat Haviva Art Centre

My visit to Givat Haviva during the spring of 2004 gave me the opportunity to meet with and interview six participants. I interviewed Hanan Abu-Fanna, a student from the Arab village of Kara²⁴, and Tzlil Sharuki, a student from the neighbouring Jewish Moshava²⁵ of Karkur²⁶. The next set of interviews was with Tamar Avney Shalit, a Jewish art teacher and Rauf Abu-Fanna, an Arab art teacher. The art teachers work together and are in their fourth year of teaching the photography project “Through Others’ Eyes”. This specific photography project began in the year 2000 and has run every year since with different groups of students. Their pamphlet states, “This innovative project, from the art centre at Givat Haviva, Israel, brings Israeli Arabs and Jewish youth together to learn photography. To complete the course, they visit each other’s homes and communities and take pictures ‘Through Other Eyes’. The final interview was with Etti Amram, the director of the Givat Haviva Art Centre.

Upon my arrival at Givat Haviva in the spring of 2004, the photography project was in its final stages of completion. The group had been working on this project from the beginning of the school year in September. I was privileged to have the opportunity to join the group in a few of their last sessions. They were finalizing their end of year performance piece that they would present to their parents and other invited guests at the closing ceremony for their photo exhibition.

²⁴ See Appendix 6, p.136 for the location on the map.

²⁵ Collective agricultural community. Village or Settlement.

²⁶ See Appendix 6, p.136 for the location on the map .

My first impression of this group of Arab-Israelis and Jewish students was one of seeing teenagers working together on a joint project that they clearly enjoyed and felt very comfortable talking about. The general atmosphere was one of camaraderie, friendship and a definite sense of cohesion and support. This was evident in the students' body language, verbal communication, and laughter and joking around. This seemed to be a group of young photographers who enjoyed each other's company and took their work very seriously.

I was curious about how the students dealt with the conflict and political tension between the Israeli Arabs and Jews. How did the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories affect them as they were working in the year-long program?

The Interviews with the Students

The interviews were all conducted at the art centre of Givat Haviva, in Etti Amram's cozy, little office. The walls of the office displayed some photos taken by the students and some colourful posters of art peace projects done at the art centre. A female manikin stood quizzically in the corner right behind the two large armchairs that were used for the interviews. The office was hot and the rising temperature was beginning to get to me even though it was only mid-May. My body had not acclimatized and I knew that drinking lots of fluids was a necessity to feeling better.

The students were the first to be interviewed. Etti Amram had previously asked the group who would be interested in participating in the research that I was conducting. The girls volunteered and they seemed comfortable right from the start. Both girls knew each other from the Jewish high school they attended. Tzlil Sharuki is a friend of Hanan Abu Fanna.

They have been friends since Grade 9. They study together at the Jewish school in Karkur, where Tzlil lives. Tzlil Sharuki heard about the project from one of her teachers and decided to check it out. Hanan Abu-Fanna is the daughter of the Arab-Israeli photography teacher, Rauf Abu-Fanna. I invited them into the office and they sat in the two large armchairs. We began the interviews with some general conversation about the reason for my visit and the focus of my thesis. I also told them about my childhood, growing up in Israel and that I was currently living in Montreal. At this point, I gave them an overview of my questions and asked them if it would be all right to videotape our conversations.

Interview Questions for the Students

1. How about beginning by you telling me a bit about yourself?
2. Did you get involved with photography in order to meet Arab/Jewish students?
3. Why did you decide to go to the Jewish High School? Is this an exception for Arab students?
4. Did your parents encourage you?
5. What do you find most important, the most meaningful when looking back over this year-long art project?
6. Can you describe how the program works: when do you meet, for how long, how do you decide on work partners, etc?

7. How do you address the issues of conflict between Arabs and Jews?
8. Do you feel that you are in different groups when conflict issues arise?
9. By working close together do you get to know each other as people first and foremost, not defined by their ethnicity?
10. Can you tell me more about the slide show you are producing?
11. Is there anything else you might like to add? Anything that you feel is important that I have not covered?

Students Responses to Interview Questions

The discussion was vibrant and fluid. The students were eager to participate in the interview session and they both took turns answering my questions. Tzlil Sharuki and Hanan Abu-Fanna were photography partners during the year-long project and this partnership was evident in the comfort level, the way they interacted together and their reliance on one another when they answered the more difficult questions. In the interview with Tzlil Sharuki, she was very candid about how she deals with the situation. She told me that she avoids talking about the Intifada²⁷, suicide bus bombings and the tense situation between the Arabs and Jews. Sharuki's main reason for joining the Givat Haviva photography project was to learn photography and make new friends. It was about having a good time and having fun. For Sharuki, talking about politics is not the most important thing on her mind and she feels it can be very difficult and scary to

²⁷ Arabic term that means uprising. There have been two main periods. The first began in 1980 and declined in 1991, coming to and end with the signing of the Oslo accord in August 1993. The al-Aqsa Intifada or second Intifada began in September 2000 and continues.

approach the subject. Sharuki mentioned specific times throughout the year where the group met together with the help of a facilitator to address the more difficult topics and help the students bring their thoughts, concerns and fears to the surface. An example of this took place after one of the bombings. Sharuki said that she realized Hanan Abu-Fanna had no direct responsibility for this event but both girls felt uncomfortable after the incident was reported on the news and in the papers. This was one of the times where they felt their two solitudes: Arab versus Jew.

According to Sharuki, she was encouraged by one of her teachers to join the Givat Haviva photography program. The main reason was, she states,

You will gain knowledge and meet new people. So yes, a big part of my decision to take on this project was having an opportunity to meet new students my own age. The important element is meeting people and making connections with them. Like my friendship with Hanan Abu-Fanna, if I didn't already know someone like her then it might have been different. She studies with me [even though she is from the Arab village of Kara] and I have known her since Grade 9.

Hanan Abu-Fanna tells me that her parents were the ones, who introduce her to the idea of studying in a Jewish school and later joining the Givat Haviva Photography Project:

My father encouraged me to register in the Jewish school at Karkur. The school is very good and quite different from our village school. It offered me different experiences. My father was instrumental in helping me research the schools. He is also the photography teacher for the Givat Haviva students and I was invited to come along and check out the program. I was not old enough to join at the time so I had to wait until Grade 10.

Sharuki adds,

We get the chance to visit in different homes. We visit the Arab-Israeli homes and the Arab-Israeli students visit the Jewish homes. I think that this is the most interesting aspect; we each have the opportunity to work together and by deciding on what topic we want to photograph, it makes it even more interesting. We have an opportunity to meet the families and see the village and how they live.

Sharuki tells me,

The camera is an easy way to see the other: you look but you are also hiding behind it. When you go into the other's home, it feels uncomfortable when you first start taking photos. Even though the families know we are coming to visit, the camera still helps us because it provides a technical/professional aspect. I think it is also the best way to get into the small, more detailed aspects of people's lives.

Hanan Abu-Fanna says,

When we join this group we understand there will be an obligation to have the group visit each other's homes. We don't take the whole group each time but rather divide into smaller groups, usually consisting of six students. It is the process of smaller, more individual groups getting together that really works.

Sharuki adds,

We get together in teams of two. An example of this is Hanan Abu-Fanna and I working together. We are usually in the large group setting but we all have our designated work partners. When we take the photos and later on develop them in the darkroom, Hanan Abu-Fanna and I team up. Right now, we are in the final stages of the project and are working on creating a play for the exhibition. The

show will be performed in June. We use our photos and slides to accompany what we write.

Sharuki continues,

The slides are also part of the teamwork. Each team will create a short skit to accompany the slide presentation. But we also have more spontaneous photo shots as well. For instance, we had a Purim²⁸ party and got all dressed up. We decided to do a photo shot dressed in our costumes.

Hanan Abu-Fanna tells me,

The project “Through Others’ Eyes” came about from the idea of seeing from another perspective. The general topic was “eyes”. We can photograph other things as well but the important issue is to have a focal point.

When I asked about the students discussing the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian/Israeli conflict, Hanan Abu-Fanna answers,

We have a woman who joins us; her name is Olga. She gets us to sit in a circle and then talk about the conflict. This is, of course, a more serious group discussion.

Sharuki adds,

This part [the conversing on the conflict] is important, very important. I don’t know if having these conversations really helps but we all know within ourselves that there are serious problems. Beyond the fun that we are having in this group experience, we are very much aware of the situation but we don’t want to talk about it.

²⁸ A Jewish Holiday that celebrates the deliverance of the Jews from a death edict in the 5th Century B.C.E.

Sharuki continues,

I think the main reason we are reluctant is fear. We come to this program to have fun! We want to enjoy what we are doing. So, if we don't talk about it, we won't ruin the day. I'll give you an example: if it's a day that a bomb has exploded somewhere in Israel, it is not comfortable to get into a discussion about it. I realize that it was not my friend, Hanan Abu-Fanna that detonated the bomb, but she feels uneasy and so do I. So we are all uncomfortable with the situation. It is at this point that once again we see each other as belonging to different groups Arab-Israeli and Jews. There is no getting around that. The question is, how do we continue to connect with each other in spite of this?

Sharuki concludes by saying,

I hope the connection [between the Arab-Israeli and Jewish students] will stay the same but we will finish our studies and the Jewish students will be drafted into the army [the Arab-Israeli students are not permitted to serve]. I feel that no matter what happens further on down the road, whether we all stay in touch or not, my approach has changed. When I first began this art project I had a different outlook on Arab-Israelis. I don't have the same views or stereotypes today as I did in the past. They have changed. This for me is the most important aspect how I view people in general and Arab-Israelis in particular.

General Findings from the Interview

After interviewing the two young students Hanan Abu-Fanna and Tzlil Sharuki, this was my general finding: It is successful to use photography as an artistic medium for bringing people together in a shared experience, to strengthen their understanding of one another. The reasons for such success, according to the students, are that photography provides a means to make a human connection with people you don't originally know. Photography

provides a safe place from which one can observe the other because the person taking the photo is 'behind' the lens, at a distance and somewhat protected. The photographer has the ability to see the other without the other knowing exactly what the subject of the photo is. By working in small groups of twos (one Arab-Israeli student is partnered with one Jewish student), they slowly build a friendship and a working relationship. They choose a topic to photograph, work on the process, develop their work and then write a skit to accompany their photos for the exhibition. The work is structured and the students must make a time commitment to participate regularly in the year-long project. Periodically, during the project, a trained facilitator works with the group. This helps the students address the more difficult issues of the Arab-Israeli/Jewish conflict/relationship. By visiting in each other's homes, they establish a connection and see how the other lives.

The Interviews with the Art Teachers

The interviews with Tamar Avney Shalit and Rauf Abu-Fanna, were conducted on a hot afternoon at the art centre of Givat Haviva, in Etti Amram's office. Due to time constraints, the art teachers decided to have the interviews together as they were meeting with the group immediately following the interviews. I explained the reasons for videotaping the interviews and then I proceeded to ask the questions I had presented to them a few days prior to the interview.

Interview Questions for the Art Teachers

1. What is your educational background and why did you decide to come and teach art at Givat Haviva?

2. Please tell me about your program and how it works.
3. Are there other art forms that would work equally well and achieve the same end results?
4. How do you approach the issue of conflict with the students?
5. Does this topic come up naturally with the students or do they need to have a moderator in order to bring the issues to the forefront?
6. Why does the topic not come up? After all, the students are very much aware of why they are coming to this photography workshop: getting to know Jews and Arabs.
7. Is there a topic/subject that you would not address or steer clear of?
8. When you evaluate the program, what criteria do you use to determine the success of the project?
9. In reference to the 1994 School Board decree that this was to be the year that focused on teaching peace in every aspect of the curriculum, could you tell me about this project?

Art Teachers' Response to Interview Questions

Tamar began by telling me about her educational background:

Each of us comes from a different background; I come from a photography background studying for my MA at the University of Tel Aviv. I am learning

film, acting and other courses along this line... it is more general but I'm involved with photography.

The reason she joined the Givat Haviva art project was because of the specific project "Through Others Eyes". This interested her and she wanted to get involved.

Rauf tells me that he comes from an art background as well,

I studied at Kalmania²⁹. It was situated in Ramat Hasharon³⁰ and today it has moved to Bet Beril³¹. I studied the arts and began teaching photography. How I arrived at Givat Haviva is actually an interesting story. One day Etti Amram, the director of the Givat Haviva Art Centre, said to me that they wanted an Arab school to come and join the Jewish school at the centre. The Jewish school was from Tel Aviv and they wanted a school from the Arab sector to join them. I said ok. I then went to the principal of the Arab school where I was teaching, to ask if we had funding for such a project. The principal told me there was no funding for such a project but the parents intervened and decided to pay half of the costs. So, I took it upon myself and said I'll give one workshop and then we can see what happens, what will develop.

Tamar tells me about the actual program and how it works,

About a month or two before we begin the program we meet the students and go through an interview process. We need to create a group of students who have time, patience and a willingness to come together. After this process, we bring the group together in September. Etti Amram selects the art project. Then the three of us, Etti, Rauf and myself get together and look back over the last year's program. We evaluate what worked and what we want to develop further.

²⁹ Teaching College

³⁰ An Israeli city on the central coastal strip.

³¹ Teachers Art College, north of Tel Aviv.

Rauf adds to what Tamar has been saying,

Yes, we develop further based on what we think will work: this year, for instance, we added the element of students photographing their parents. In addition, we will put on a performance so that the students are more actively involved and engaged in the work. We also display the work at the end of the year, but we feel the students need to be more involved in the process. We also do a slide show. The slides are made from the photos that the students took in each other's houses. So, whatever they photograph we duplicate in slide format. Every year we emphasize something different and new in the program. This way it is not boring for the students.

I'm curious about the specific art medium and why they use photography as opposed to painting or drawing. Tamar tells me,

I have not used another method or art form other than photography. Basically, I don't think there is one art form that works better than the other. I think that any tool that you use could be valuable. With regard to photography, there is one very interesting point that is not found in other media – you feel comfortable going into another person's home and 'getting into the home', literally going into the bathroom, the bedroom, the parents' bedroom, anywhere... of course we prepare the parents beforehand –and tell them what might happen and what they could expect.

Rauf disagrees. He sees the value of using photography from this perspective:

It gives you an immediate effect [the act of taking photos]. The effect of photography is more powerful than, for instance, drawing or painting. You photograph the moment – you get into the private spaces. You don't knock on the door, so to speak; all of a sudden you are taking photos of my room, clothes, and closet... Some of the students say: " No, no! Don't take a photo of that..." It

puts pressure on them. They begin to fix up their room and clean it up beforehand. Photography is a powerful tool, besides the fact that they talk about meeting Jews and Arabs... and the camera is the tool that lets this meeting take place. The camera gives freedom to get into the heart of the matter. It lets them begin to work, come together and make close contact. Being able to take photos of each other's eyes is powerful. Drawing, for instance, is different. Maybe drama, would be different as well, I don't know. Photography gives you this strong effect and a sense of feeling it is more tangible.

Tamar continues to talk about the home visits,

In the beginning, they [the students] just look around and take it all in. We do a few first visits, but each time we go to a different student's house. At first, it is difficult to think about taking photos. So we tell them to act like a tourist – just look around. Then we give them instructions: students choose a topic that they will focus on in each home that they visit. It could be windows, food, and those kinds of personal things. Each student will follow this theme during the course of the year.

Rauf comments on what Tamar is saying,

First, we need to arrive at a general agreement. The parents need to agree on the photography project. We conduct interviews and tell the parents about the art project. We also need to be knowledgeable about the existing conflict. But we really jump right in and begin to take photos. Tamar and I don't bring up the issue of the conflict; we just let them begin to snap photos. Olga joined us and she is a trained mediator that we use when the need arises. She will work on bringing out the conflict issues. An example of this is before the visit to the Arab village of Kara, she asked the Jewish students, "What do you anticipate when you visit? What are you worried about?" She brought up all of these kinds of questions and concerns in one meeting. When they returned from the visit they also discussed [with Olga] what they felt.

This aspect of using a mediator is a new addition to the process. Tamar says,

This is a new aspect that we have brought to the project this year because we came to the conclusion that just to do art is not enough. And this year, even though we have not concluded and summarized the year, I think it is not enough, that we did not address the issue of the conflict. We don't have enough time.

Rauf adds,

Yes, there is not enough time; we didn't really deal with it [the Arab-Israeli conflict].

Tamar continues,

And it is also a project in and of itself, this conflict. Olga has been here a few times and she will return for the next meeting, to do it again [have a discussion with the students].

Rauf adds to what Tamar has said,

In my opinion, and I spoke to Tamar about this, it's not enough. She [Olga] should have been present at more of the meetings.

I am interested in the students' comfort level in addressing the Arab-Israeli/Israeli conflict. Tamar says,

The students can 'air out issues' and ...they feel comfortable talking, but they don't talk about the conflict. They talk about everything else, just not about the conflict.

I wonder if a permanent mediator is the solution to getting the students to dialogue about the conflict.

Rauf responds to this,

No, there is not enough time. It's not because of the mediator. We come to take photos, develop and then print them. So you can't all of a sudden talk about this because it is a subject that is already there on its own. Between them they talk, but they don't go deep into the topic. So the issues stay inside. This is not good in my opinion. This needs to come up and out. I have discussed this numerous times with Tamar.

Tamar comments in response,

This does not come out naturally from them [the students]. They come with the aim of meeting each other and not getting into the issues of the conflict... after all, remember they are still kids. They are not carrying around baggage [like the parents and adults]. We brought the parents together and within five minutes there was *sisu vesimchu*³²... tralalalala... it only took five minutes! But the students first and foremost don't want to create hostility.

Rauf reinforces what Tamar has just said,

Yes, hostility, they don't want it.

Tamar continues,

They [the students] also don't have the memories. You know the parents have memories of this incident or that bombing... the kids observe it from the sideline, so unless you lead them into a discussion about it [the conflict], they won't talk about it.

³² Hebrew expression that is equivalent to 'fun and games'. Or it could mean lots of excitement.

Rauf discusses the importance of dialogue,

Concerning the dialogue within the group, we need to develop it. In my opinion we are presently doing the maximum that we can do. I describe it like this: a Jewish boy goes into an Arab home, an Arab home in the village of Kara. He begins freely to take photos. He sees a different culture. We are doing a job, not just any job but serious work that is very important. And an Arab boy visits a Jewish home; he never had this kind of opportunity before, never! This is fun, it's exciting! He sees [how] things [are] and what is different.

Tamar tells me about the visits,

It is a *chavaya*³³. Afterwards, if you ask them about the differences they would say they are not that great, but the experience stays with them and it was special. Look, also for us (she points to Rauf and smiles) it is also a fun experience. I have been to some 40 homes and so has Rauf. You begin to see a model or pattern. Yes, that's it.

Rauf comments on the home visits,

The part that is strong and stands out is when I follow them, once they go into the home, their reaction, their looking for detail-- they go into the room-- the private space: what does it resemble? Does it resemble me? He has Maccabi Haifa³⁴, or he has Hapoel Tel Aviv³⁵... Oh look he has CDs; oh, he likes this kind of music and he has a computer. You understand, so everything comes up and this makes the connection.

³³ Hebrew term that means a positive experience.

³⁴ Israeli soccer team that represent Haifa.

³⁵ Israeli soccer team that represents Tel Aviv.

Tamar says,

Also, their generation is much more similar than for example Rauf's and mine. And for sure they are more similar than their parent's generation. Because of the visual culture, computers and the English language, the cultures are united.

Rauf commented,

It is united or joined.

Tamar adds,

The base is united. Each culture has a uniting base and a separate base. So, in these things [music, computers], it is more natural for them to connect, you understand?

I ask, how they evaluate and determine if the program is successful and achieving the goals?

Rauf asks me if the question was dealing with the photography.

He comments,

You know, many issues have come up. We have them come here to talk but we want it to come from them. An example would be this particular photo is showing a negative memory... the Arab-Israeli student may say, "I feel jealous because I don't have what you (the Jewish student) has-- the nicely developed roads, the beautiful houses, etc... so the conversation is happening and we feel it is flowing-- let it come up.

Rauf adds,

Yes, yes. Whatever they feel like talking about is OK.

Tamar answers the question,

I think this question is very problematic. What is success? What does that mean exactly? That we make or create peace? We are not at war... they (the students) when they meet in the future, as grownups-- they will think about the experience-- think about the conflict and think about what they learned from this project. We don't have one goal for the group or one goal in mind for this project. Perhaps this is why it is difficult for me to answer your question. After this year-long course, they do get to know each other and they have the tools to keep this connection going. If after the program they keep up the friendship, well that depends on many different things. This is also one of the questions that is asked in the beginning by the parents. They ask what will really come from this program? When you (the Jewish student in the army) are at the roadblock or checkpoint, will you remember your experience and friendship with your Arab-Israeli friend at Givat Haviva? Nothing happens fast-- it will not happen in two or three months.

Rauf has a different response,

My viewpoint is different. I see it from an education perspective: you work with youth that is going to be, one day, "key players" when they grow up. So I can't look at this project with a short-term view. I think about it 10 years down the road...what will be with Adi or Einat-- one of the boys will be in the army in a few years. What will happen if he is stationed in the occupied territories at a checkpoint? He will hopefully think twice as to how to handle and address the Arabs at the checkpoint. For me this is important, I know that I have contributed, even if it is a small step. I know that by working with the youth *due*

*keyum*³⁶ project I have made a small difference. When one of the Arab students goes out to work in the city, let's say Tel Aviv, he or she already knows how to act and handle himself or herself. They won't be in shock. I can say that after we finish the project we have done a good job-- yet I still look further down the road to the long-term changes. I'll give you an example: I had a conversation with a former student from Russia, all of a sudden out of the blue he phones me. So I ask him, "What are you up to"?

Rauf continues telling me the story,

"Well, I'm in the army-- I'm stationed in the occupied territories--and having a good time dealing with the people³⁷". I tell him, "Well take good care of yourself and the people you are with, and I'm glad you called!"

Rauf adds,

I had such a good feeling from this call-- it really was nice to hear from him.

Tamar comments,

And there is another issue. The participants that come here are not coming from a negative perspective. They have a sincere desire to get to know each other-- they are open. And I mean from both the Arab-Israeli and the Jewish side. It would be interesting to work with Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jewish youth who don't come with this willingness. At Givat Haviva we are in this 'bubble'; we live in a different world.

³⁶ A co-existence.

³⁷ He was able to relate to the Palestinians and treat them with respect. He attributed this to his experience at Givat Haviva.

Rauf,

Our students come from homes that are open to the concept of *due keyum*. The kids live five minutes away from each other and they can meet for coffee at the local shopping mall. It makes me feel really good when they come back the next day and tell me about them just hanging out.

Tamar,

It is as if it 'breaks through' the ghetto-like feeling. By this I am referring to the villages in the area. They were separate, each living in their own community. The kids are forming relationships and so are the adults.

Rauf,

One of the mothers, whose daughter was in our project, told us about her experience: She said, "My daughter came back after visiting the village of Kara, and she told me: Mom, they are kids just like us!" This made me feel really good about the project and the home visits.

Rauf continues,

It is as if this statement from her daughter answered her most basic expectations for the project and the reason she had sent her daughter in the first place: to get to know the other. It is the simple real-life issues, very important. I can look at how the students relate, and say sure it is normal but this is definitely the result of the project.

Tamar tells me,

This is why I think every school needs a project like this one. It could be art-related or more general to meet the needs of a variety of children: sports, theatre,

etc. It needs to provide a way of meeting that is more equal, a more level playing field. Every school should have this kind of program; it should be part of the school system.

Rauf comments,

Talking about that project, I'll give an example: it was all about kids coming together and talking... in my opinion it is not enough the talking. What they need is the hands-on experience of doing, as well.

Tamar,

Yes, that hands-on is very vital and important.

Rauf,

Like when our group first meets-- we give them cameras and then let them have fun. They are at eye level and have the ability to do what they want. They each have a camera and the opportunity to talk with each other about what they are doing. They begin to talk about many different topics but this needs lots of time and opportunity to meet before it can develop.

General Findings from the Interviews

From the interview with the art teachers, I was able to see two very distinct points of view. Tamar, who has been involved with the Givat Haviva photography project for the past four years, views the art process as the important element in building relationships. The mere fact that the students work together, visit and photograph each other's homes and, in the end, finish off the year with a photo exhibition, is the means to a human connection and one way to bridge the gap that exists between the two groups and break

down the stereotypes and prejudices. This person-to-person interaction, according to Tamar, is the key element of the program's success. When asked what happens after the program is over, Tamar tells me,

Whether the students stay friends or remain in contact with each other or whether the program changed them fundamentally, this all remains to be seen. We need follow-up programs and research to see if this truly achieves the objectives we are hoping for.

Rauf commented on the long-term goals and the specific art education pedagogy by saying,

In my opinion, the issues are pedagogical in nature. I see the success as far-reaching: have we been able to create better understanding between the students that will transcend time and challenging political situations? I am very proud of what we have accomplished with this program and the end result is a professional photo exhibition. But I look down the road to, let us say, 10 years from now. These students are the 'key players' in our future political arena. Will the work we do today, the connections and friendships, be strong enough and lasting to build the future bridges?

He then went on to comment about the need for more dialogue opportunity within the project. Rauf understands the importance of the hands-on work but points out that in order to move further along and deal with the difficult social issues, consistent structured dialogue sessions are a necessity. A professional mediator or counsellor should participate in this process to ensure its validity. In summarizing his views, Rauf made it clear that the work at Givat Haviva is important, very much in demand and deeply gratifying for him as an art teacher.

Interview with the Director of the Art Centre

The interview with Etti Amram was conducted at the Givat Haviva Art Centre in her office. With her permission, I videotaped the interview and asked her the questions that I had given to her for review.

Interview Questions for the Director of the Givat Haviva Art Centre

1. How long have you been teaching art?
2. The other schools that visit your centre, do they have both Arab and Jewish students in their classrooms?
3. The art teachers that you hire come with what level/type of credentials?
4. Please tell me more about the project: "Through Others Eyes".
5. When you decide upon which students will be accepted into the program, does lack of Hebrew or Arabic factor in?
6. Can you tell me in more detail about the home visits that the students participate in?
7. Once the program is over, how can the students stay in touch? Do you offer specific ideas on how to keep up the communication: projects, meetings, events, etc?

8. How do you resolve the personal conflicts that may develop in the group and I am interested in the specific issues that may come up due to the Arab-Israeli, Palestinian/ Jewish issues?
9. What Art Education books could you recommend concerning the use of art and conflict transformation?

Director's Response to Interview Questions

Etti Amram, the director of the Givat Haviva Art Centre, provided a wealth of information due in part to her length of involvement within art education in general and the Givat Haviva Art Centre in particular. She is the direct link between the families, students, art teachers, extended staff and the public. Etti has been an art teacher for many years and is currently a practising artist. Her role as art teacher and facilitator between Jewish and Arab-Israeli youth in Israel began in the 1980s. She believes that art can bridge the social gap between Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews and build positive relationships between the students and families who come to the Givat Haviva Art Centre. The art program currently deals with Arab-Israelis because it is very difficult for Palestinian youth to enter Israel on a regular basis. In the past they did work with students from the West Bank but at the present time the situation is much more difficult.

Etti also added,

Our philosophy is to use art, to create and to have a hands-on experience and with this creative process help to bridge the gaps of indifference, and the social stereotypes that keep the two groups apart. This does not have to be exclusively for Jewish and Arab participants. It can include religious and secular

populations, Ashkenazim³⁸ and Sephardim³⁹, new immigrants and *sabras*⁴⁰ or any other groups that are experiencing conflict due to their perceived differences.

In the past, the focus of the art project was to use painting, drawing, sculpture and woodworking as the primary medium. Five years ago, Etti decided to try photography instead of the other art forms. The primary reason for the switch was not for aesthetic reasons but rather that photos could be taken practically anywhere and at any time. She wanted to provide an experience that would take the students closer to each other's way of living, to allow them to get up close and personal and be able to see inside of each other's homes, bedrooms and kitchens. Etti states that the advantage of using photography with the two groups was that it enabled them to visit each other's homes and communities, something that under normal circumstances would not happen between Israeli Arabs and Jews. She told me,

The project "Through Others' Eyes" begins each year in the fall. The meetings are held at Givat Haviva because it is considered neutral ground for the students and their families. The home visits, which are the most interesting as far as interactions and group dynamics are concerned, take place during January and February. At this point, the students have had several months of working together at the art centre and they are beginning to establish friendships.

³⁸ Jews whose 'recent' ancestors (within the last thousand years) were from Northern or Eastern Europe.

³⁹ Jews who left Spain or Portugal after the 1492 expulsion –the word "Sephardim" comes from the Hebrew term for Spain.

⁴⁰ A Hebrew expression equating Israeli-born descendants, those born after 1948, to the fruit of the cactus plant: the prickly pear. They are tough and resilient on the outside, but sweet on the inside.

Etti continued,

The underpinnings of our program are to focus on creating, making, doing, hands-on working together, talking and connecting. It is very important for the students to talk about the intimate issues like their relationships with boys and girls, the music they enjoy, the programs they watch on T.V., how they deal with their parents and siblings, the books they enjoy and their favourite foods. They don't want to focus only on the problems, and the Arab-Israeli/Israeli conflict, usually it is last on the list.

Etti continues,

I believe that art is a good medium to facilitate the opening up of ourselves to another person. You make something, create something and share in an experience. This usually leads to talking and conversations. As I get to know you, I begin to realize that we share many similarities and you and I are not strangers anymore. Perhaps we may even become friends.

Etti adds,

The project is set up for 10 Arab-Israelis and 10 Jewish students. This is due in part to the laboratory facilities and the student-teacher ratio that is required to develop the photos. We try to have an even ratio of boys to girls to balance the social dynamics. The age range is 16 to 17. This age group was chosen because we need their commitment to come once a week, for three hours each session, for the duration of nine months.

The students are chosen from the regional schools in the area. Etti says,

The selection process depends primarily on their desire to meet new students, their willingness to open their home and receive others as guests, welcome the

other, a readiness to learn photography, and last but not least, a commitment to show up week after week and stay with the project until the end.

Etti tells me that another important area to consider is which language is spoken during the workshops, Hebrew or Arabic,

The language that is spoken during the sessions depends on who is speaking and which language they want to converse in. Having equal rights means the students choose which language they want to use: Arabic or Hebrew. In the case of Arabic speaking students who don't feel confident in Hebrew, a translator will accompany him or her. It is important not to impose one language over another.

This commitment to the project is paramount. Without consistency, they won't make connections and build friendships. Etti comments,

They need to take the responsibility upon their shoulders, to show up for all the meetings even if the next day they have an important exam or if the weather is lousy and they feel tired. No excuses!

The students do not sign a contract per se but during the interview process, the interviewees make the importance of the time obligation very clear. The interviewing process involves others besides Etti. The committee assigned by Givat Haviva to help Etti with the interviews, get a general feeling or idea about the students plus they rely on their previous interviews and what they learned from them. Etti tells me,

Once the processing is complete, the students are invited for their first meeting at Givat Haviva. Actually, the first two meetings are just conversational. They want the students to get to know one another, share their expectations for the program and find out what they are worried about, what do they expect by the

end of the program, is it important for them to meet Arab and Jewish youth or just to meet new people in general? For these meetings, professional mediators are brought to Givat Haviva.

Etti says,

After the students work together for about two months, the parents are invited for a joint meeting.

It is at this time Etti informs the parents of the progress, tells them what the students have been working on and why it is important to have the home visits. All aspects of the home visits are discussed, like welcoming one another with warm hospitality, informing and preparing the rest of the family, being aware that the students will look around the home and then decide what interests them as a topic to photograph. All topics are acceptable from the artistic perspective. It could be the food in the fridge or the toiletries in the bathroom. It may even be the socks hanging out to dry... as long as the parents give their consent then the students have a free hand to explore and choose a topic that interests them.

Etti adds,

Once this is done, a home visit schedule is set up. Usually after all the details are ironed out, the parents get into a political conversation. This is almost inevitable. How can Arab-Israelis and Jews sit together and not end up in a political discussion! Most of the time the students intervene, and try to stop the debate by saying to the parents, “ Wait a minute, wait a minute, you want to talk about politics that is Ok but we came here to talk about the project and about photography. We came to get to know one another and learn how to take pictures. Politics were never mentioned!

Etti continues,

At this point, we let the students have the control over the situation and tell the parents we will have a special evening solely for the purpose of talking politics. The parents are invited back to Givat Haviva and we set up a few meetings that are conducted by trained facilitators or moderators. It is of interest to note that when the Jewish parents commented on their fear of sending the students to the Arab-Israeli village, the Arab-Israeli parents responded by saying, "The village is safe. All the attacks take place in Israel. We will take full responsibility for your children when they are with us". So, you see, this is the type of conversation that ensues and the parents cover many issues that they feel are important. Similarly, to the students in our program, this is a rare opportunity for Jewish and Arab-Israeli parents to really converse and express themselves on a multitude of topics and in a structured environment with a moderator to help guide the topics and the emotions that arise. Perhaps having a cooperative focus, their children are working together to create an exhibition, also adds to their sense of pride and hope for a peaceful future.

This year the art centre incorporated something different, Etti says,

The students took photos of their parents as we added another get-together that is above and beyond the parents meeting to talk about politics. We had another meeting at Givat Haviva and this gave the students an opportunity to take photos in this mixed environment.

Etti explained,

The partnering up between the students is done right away, from the very first meeting. In this way, a balance is achieved because each team has one Arab-Israeli and one Jew, as was the case with Hanan Abu-Fanna and Tzlil Sharuki. Another aspect is the camaraderie and the cooperation that needs to take place in order to decide on what photos to take, and then develop and later on exhibit.

The students will need to dialogue, negotiate, come to an agreement and work out the issues that arise.

Etti believes that the camera is magical. It offers the students a unique opportunity, and permits them to come together in each other's homes via the shared experience of taking personal photos that tell individual stories. The social pressure is reduced because they are looking through a lens that can help the photographer feel more comfortable and secure. The subject or the person being photographed does not really know what the focus is and this could also alleviate some of the tension. This aspect of home visits, personal contact and interactions might be the key elements or components to the program's success. However, in formally evaluating the success of the program, Etti states,

It is difficult to determine exactly which element of the photography project is the most successful. It could be that the mere experience of working together and then having personal contact within each other's family, is what turns the tide towards understanding and friendship. Or it could also be the combination of consistently working together for the duration of a year and a project like photography that enables the students to talk, share stories, connect and build relationships.

Another example of a photography project that came about spontaneously can be seen in the photos taken during the Jewish holiday of Purim. In accordance with the festivities of the holiday, the students wanted to dress up in costumes, as is customary, and then do a photo shoot. Etti states,

I brought to Givat Haviva different kinds of dress-up clothes. We also provided a make-up artist to help with the face painting. The students were involved with

helping one another dress up creatively and also to put on the make-up. Once this was done, they took turns photographing each other. We put together a small festival and decided that the photos would be used for the end-of-the-year exhibition along with the photos taken for “Through Others’ Eyes”.

Each year, about midway through the project, Etti awaits the transformation, and it is always fascinating. The important element she is waiting to observe is the amazement and surprise when the students begin the home visits. This, according to Etti, is where the real connection and understanding begin to take place. All of a sudden, they discover that they are actually very similar. They listen to the same music: world music. The posters hanging on the bedroom walls are also familiar. They see the same popular singers and other icons like major league football players, or fashion models. Another commonality is the computer. Most homes have them, both Arab-Israeli and Jewish. One major difference that they can identify with right away is the size of the Arab-Israeli homes. They are much bigger both in room size and the number of floor levels. So when the students add up the similarities and the differences, they find that they have much more in common. The home visits provide an intimate experience of looking inside, looking at the details of another life. Next, comes the realization of why should I not accept you, you don’t have anything that is really different, strange or threatening in your home, from what I have been able to observe. It is the starting point of acceptance. From this point, they move forward to further meetings and getting together to go to the mall or to see a movie. They realize something else; if they want to spend time together, get to know each other and to connect away from Givat Haviva, nothing is stopping them. In the majority of cases, Arab-Israeli students and Jewish students don’t have opportunities to meet socially. The main purpose of our art project is to get the students together and

find opportunities for them to interact. Photography is wonderful because in the end of the process we have a beautiful exhibition; a traveling art show and the students have had an experience that under normal circumstances would not have taken place. That being said, the most important aspect of the project is what transpires between the students.

Etti adds,

I believe that somewhere in their heart a change has taken place, they have been touched by the experience, a positive experience and this will stay with them. When later on down the road they meet as an Arab-Israeli, Palestinian or a Jew, they will think and react differently because of this experience at Givat Haviva. A positive experience is heart-warming and it brings people together. For sure, we need to follow up with the alumni but, at the moment, this right here, right now is the important focus.

As the photography project comes to an end, the students are encouraged to stay in contact with each other (this is also something that they, the students, feel is important). One of the main lines of communication is the Internet. Of course, telephone calls are also acceptable and more than that, the students do end up meeting in the mall for coffee and movies. Etti says that once the relationship is established, the conversations can flow and the teachers acknowledge that the interactions are very different by the time they reach the end of the project. They have created friendships.

During the course of the project, Etti invites a few different professional mediators. There is one mediator who follows the program from the beginning and participates in the group discussions on a regular basis. She can be called in for specific topics or when the need arises for further discussions based on the students interests. Etti elaborates,

From time to time, we invite her [Olga, the mediator] like, for instance, after a home visit. We, at Givat Haviva believe that it's very important to talk about the experience. Her job is to help the students express themselves in appropriate ways and to work through their ideas, frustration, distrust, and misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

General Findings from the Interview

After interviewing Etti Amram, my general findings are that by visiting each other's homes, the students begin to see each other from a different perspective. They expose their private lives and make them public through the images of their home, rooms, kitchen and the intimate details of their life. This is brought into the public domain via the traveling photo exhibition. The playing field is equalized as much as possible: no preferential treatment on either side, a balance between Arab-Israelis and Jews, Arabic and Hebrew, and males and females. Commitment to the project is vital for the success of the program. Both the Arab-Israeli and Jewish families are involved in the process. Working within the large group, the students are assigned a partner to work with; one Arab-Israeli student teams up with a Jewish student. By working, visiting in each other's homes and spending time together, they realize there are more similarities than differences. The students are encouraged to keep up the communication once they have left the program. How the issues surrounding the Arab-Israeli, Palestinian and Jewish conflict are discussed depends on what the students are experiencing and expressing along with the political situation in the country.

The General Findings as They Relate to Wendy Ewald's Photography Projects

In comparing what I found in the literature review, concerning some of the photography projects that Ewald conducted in the U.S.A. to the photography project from Givat Haviva, Israel, these are the similarities between the two.

Photography helps open the doors to each other's homes so that the students can get to know one another. It gives them an opportunity to share their home life with the other students, showing how they live, sleep, eat and the basic day-to-day lifestyle. They go from being strangers to knowing each other on an intimate level. This helps break down pre-existing stereotypes and prejudices because they see the similarities and the differences, they have an opportunity to communicate and build friendships and, usually, this is the first time that they have an opportunity to be together while working on a joint project.

The camera offers a vantage point for the photographer. It is a safe place to be. No one knows exactly what you are photographing and you can hide behind it. It gives confidence to the person holding it and a sense of control and power. You are in charge of what you want to say with the images. It is instant and captures the moment. It helps to tell the story as it is. But you need to have integrity and honesty to represent what you see and not adjust or change it.

When students are permitted and encouraged to take photos of subjects that are interesting to them, they usually choose what is important and on their minds. This opens the lines of communication among students, and between students and their teachers. It can also extend to the family and the community. They are exposed to seeing from

another perspective. This perspective may be different but it will also share some common ground. Photography in conjunction with writing, narratives and sharing the finished product with others, helps to create a context for the work that elaborates and provides meaning. Photography, dialogue and writing the story or commenting on the photos is all part of the same package. One without the other would not have the same impact on the creator or the observer. The students are proud of what they have accomplished and this increases self-awareness and self-esteem. Commenting on the importance of her contribution,

“Ewald helped her students to confront their racial prejudices by understanding each other’s differences as well as similarities” (Berger, p., 53).

This relates back to what Tzlil Sharuki, from Givat Haviva said about the most important aspect of the program for her. Sharuki’s perspective of the ‘Other’ had changed. She no longer held the same biases that she had before getting to know Arab-Israeli youth via the photography project.

The Importance of the Art Teacher and the Facilitator

Having an informed teacher is important. Whether it is the art teacher who instructs or the combination of art teacher and facilitator, their role should not be underestimated.

Students under guidance, make pictures [photos] and find out what happens when certain things are done, but also find out about themselves, discovering in practice previously unrealized attitudes, preferences, imaginative capabilities, pleasures and satisfaction” (Richmond, p., 116).

Having a facilitator or mediator is important. They help create an atmosphere of safety and trust. In order to work on issues that are conflicting and disturbing, students need to feel they are going to be OK once they express their feelings. Hanan Abu-Fanna from Givat Haviva, commented on the role of the mediator in their project “ [The mediator] would have us sit in a circle and she would get us to talk about the conflict-- the situation-- this was more serious”. Etti Amram, the director from Givat Haviva, also commented on the role of the mediator:

The mediator follows our program each year and she has been working with us from the beginning. From time to time we invite her, like after home visits. It is very important to talk about the visit and the reactions from the students. We want this to be professional so we bring her in. Her job is to council the group. In this way, the students will be able to have closure to the year and the project.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the personal interviews with the students from Givat Haviva, their art teachers and the director of the photography project “Through Others Eyes”. It looks at the commonality and the general findings in the art project and compares them to Wendy Ewald’s photo project “White-Self-Black-Self”. In the following Chapter Five, I will elaborate on my experience within the Montreal Dialogue Group and the art process and exhibition “Meeting in the Middle” that was a collaboration between the MDG and a community-based art project.

Chapter Five

The Montreal Dialogue Group

Upon returning from my visit to Israel I was ready to begin the final stage of research, which according to David Hopkins, is the "... research in action"(137). I did this by joining the Montreal Dialogue Group (MDG). This group is made up of Arabs, Arab-Israelis, Palestinians, Jews and Israelis living in Montreal. This grass-roots group was established as a meeting place for Arabs and Jews who want to get to know each other a bit better and talk about the situation in the Middle East. By summer 2004, the group was a registered, non-profit organization. The group members numbered about 20 and the meetings took place in the participants homes. My involvement with the group began in the spring of 2004, before I embarked on my research project in Israel. Upon returning from my summer research in Israel/Palestine, I felt the need to contribute concretely in some way to both the Jewish and Arab communities in Montreal and the MDG offered an opportunity to achieve this. By September 2004, the MDG membership had grown substantially and therefore needed a larger meeting place. It was at this point that the YMCA in Westmount donated space for the group meetings on a monthly basis.

The discussion topics were chosen for the year by the board members. Each meeting would begin with a combination of guest speaker (including personal stories), slide show, power point or a documentary film/video. Once the presentation was over, the large group would break up into several smaller discussion groups. The rules for appropriate dialoguing, to distinguish it from debating, are read out every time. Then the group, with one member serving as moderator, would begin to discuss the topic/issues. Each person

had an opportunity to talk and the rest of the participants were asked to wait their turn before adding their comments. In this way, each person who wanted to speak had the group's undivided attention until he or she was finished.

The MDG encourages delving into personal stories experienced by the members. Israelis, Arab-Israelis and Palestinians who lived in Israel, the Occupied Territories, Lebanon and Jordan primarily tell these stories. Due to the format and structure of the meetings, a sense of support and trust developed over time. I began to feel comfortable with talking openly about difficult and sensitive issues. I observed this similar change in the group as a whole. I was given the opportunity to tell my story during the March meeting titled: "The effects of suicide bombing on Israelis". For my presentation, I read the short story I had written⁴¹ previously. This story was written in the present tense and it dealt with me receiving the phone call that my brother Ari had been killed. I also showed a power point presentation with images of my brother from his early childhood when I was his preschool teacher, and other photos that depicted his life up to the time of his serving in the Israeli army and the last time I saw him in Jerusalem (See Appendix 3). This is the story I read:

My Brother, Ari Pearlmutter zl

Sitting around the small preschool tables at Vanier College, Montreal, the student educators and I are talking about the sugaring off field trip we just came back from this morning. We had so much fun with the kids! The children have gone home but we are full of excitement and the need to talk!

⁴¹ For the class ARTE 682, Concordia University, 2004.

My office phone rings. On the other end is Bob, a friend from Israel who is living in Ottawa. "Tali, you need to sit down because what I have to say is going to be difficult for you." My mind begins to race; what is he saying? What is difficult? Is this a joke? I feel a surge of adrenalin. My body is on alert... I pull out the office chair and sit down but this does not feel real, what is going on... it seems like forever. Bob says, " This morning around 9 a.m. Ari was boarding the bus at the Hadera bus station. He was on his way to the memorial service for his army friend... He was on the bus when a few minutes later a suicide bus bomber got on the bus through the back doors and seconds later he blew himself up. Ari was also killed in the explosion. I know you will want to go back home to Israel for the funeral so stay on the line and you will talk to the Israeli Consul General.

My body is shaking. I feel cold and my mind is blank... my stomach is tight and as my hands tremble, thoughts bring me back... what just happened? What did Bob say? Is this real? Did this really happen? Ari, how can this be? I just spoke to you and visited with you for the first time in 10 years! How can you be dead? Where are you right now? Who is taking care of you?? Are you whole? Are you bleeding?

The voice on the phone says... "Tali, this is the Israeli Consulate. We are sorry for the loss of your brother Ari. First, do you need support right now? Can I call your husband? A friend? I can also send over someone from the consulate. How can I help you right now?" I respond: "I'm OK, I'm at work and my friends are here. But what do I do now? I feel very confused and I'm not thinking straight. How do I get home to Israel?" "OK, listen, you go home, get ready, pack some clothes. You are booked on Air Canada, the 6:00 o'clock flight from Dorval to Toronto. All arrangements have been made. Shalom and we are very sorry for your loss. I respond and say: Shalom.

The next part is a blur of hugs and words of comfort from the CEGEP professors. I take my keys and collect my jacket. Driving home, I'm trying to

understand... home... call the kids school, tell them what has happened... Josh, my youngest son, is home. He is 13... he helps me pack some clothes in a bag... we hug and move around not really knowing what is needed... I'm feeling very numb and shaky. I find some money, my Israeli passport and a few belongings.

It's 6 p.m. CFCF evening news is on just as I take my seat on the plane. I see the report on the bus bombing. I see a soldier. He is near the back portion of the destroyed bus. He is lying face-upwards outside on the asphalt. I know instinctively that this is my brother Ari, he is all alone ... I want to reach out and touch him, hold him and be with him. Why is no one there with him? Why is he all alone? His body is partially covered with an army blanket... my need to be with him right there, right now is overwhelming... the news is over... I need to see it again. I am alone, how do I do this? Who do I talk to? I begin to cry, the tears won't stop, they just keep coming.

In Toronto, an Israeli security personnel meets me on the plane before everyone gets off. I'm crying, my eyes are blurry, my mind numb... people, movement--from here to there, the security personnel holds my arm and walks me... papers, stamped, move on quickly... I just trust the security guy, I can't think anymore...

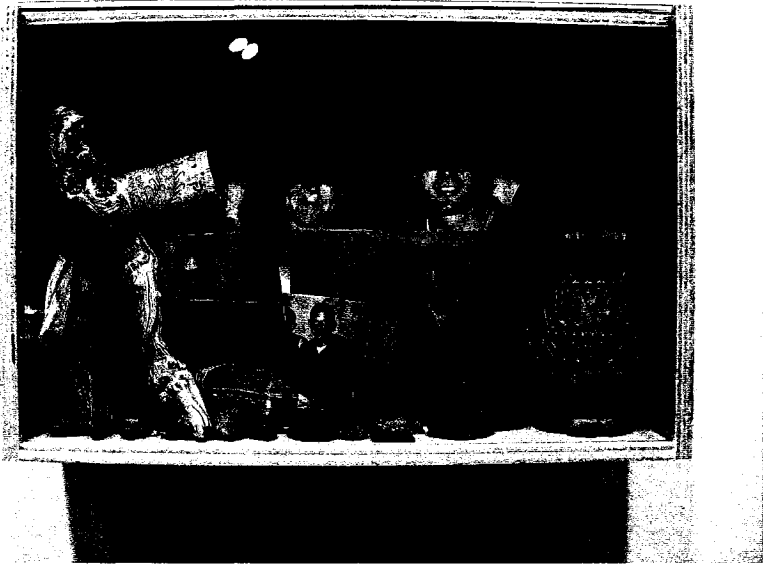
Lod Airport, Israel, the army officer is standing in front of me here in the first class section of the El Al plane. "Tali, we will drive you straight down to the Arava to be with your family. Try to get some rest. The drive will be about four hours. We will go via Be'er Sheva". The army jeep is waiting right outside the airplane. We get in and drive away.

I awake as we pull into the settlement. The jeep is driving fast and dust is trailing behind us. The jeep comes to a full stop and it seems like hundreds of mourners surround us. Momentarily, my youngest brother Dari greets me and we embrace with tears and choked sobs. Then out of the desert darkness comes Fraza, the mother of Awwad, my Bedouin friend who was murdered. She holds

me tight and comforts me. We cannot speak but just embrace, our bodies trembling and feeling all the shared pain. We hold on, not wanting to let go and, all the while, moving together into the house where my parents are sitting *shiva*.



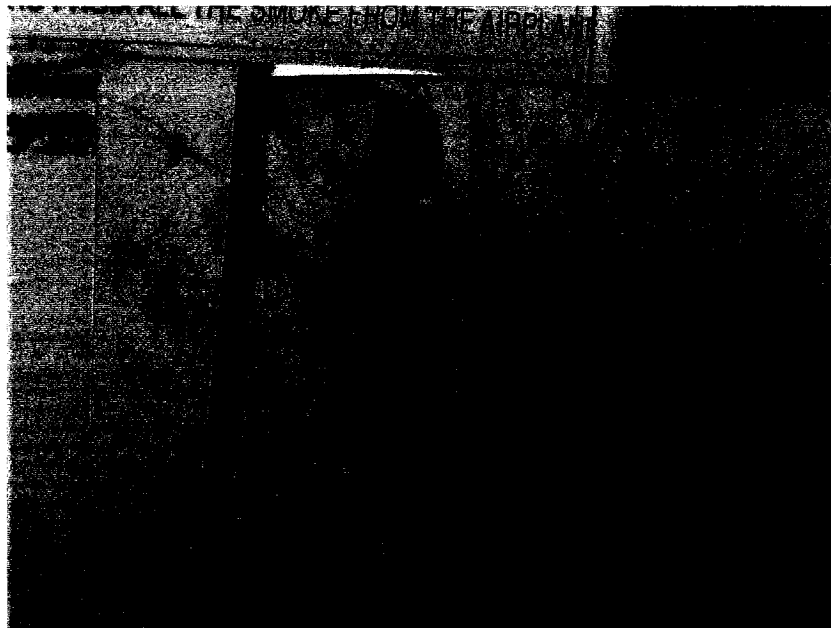
“Ari’s Joy: Childhood Memories” Triptych Box Installation (Figure 4)



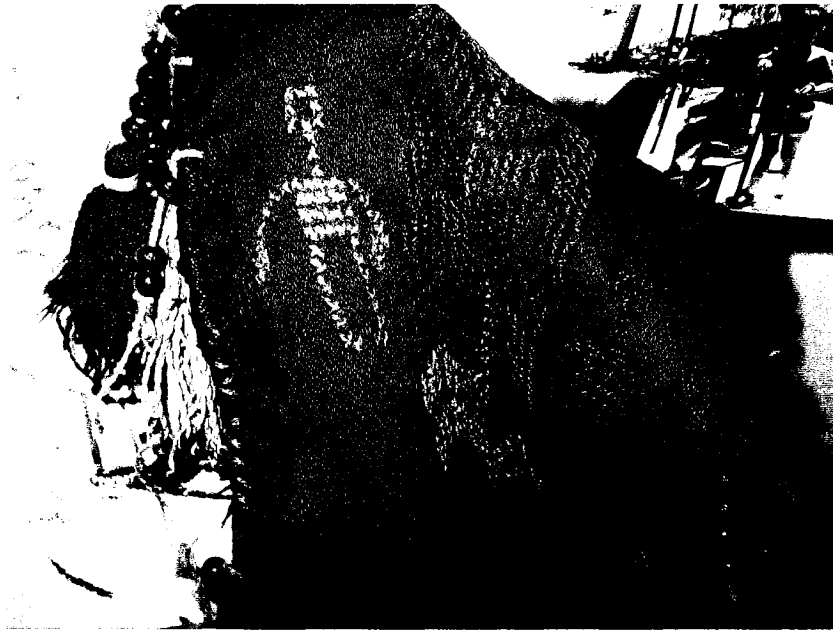
“Memorial” (Figure 5)



"The Road to Peace" (Figure 6)



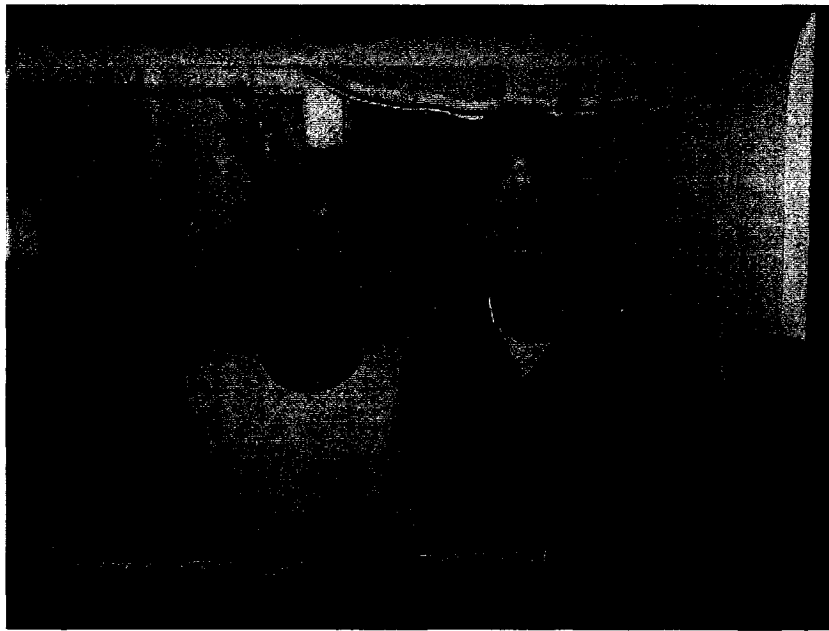
"Ari's Joy": Ari and friend in preschool, detail (Figure 7)



“Ari’s Joy”: Small Palestinian pouch gift from Bedouin Mother Fraza, detail (Figure8)



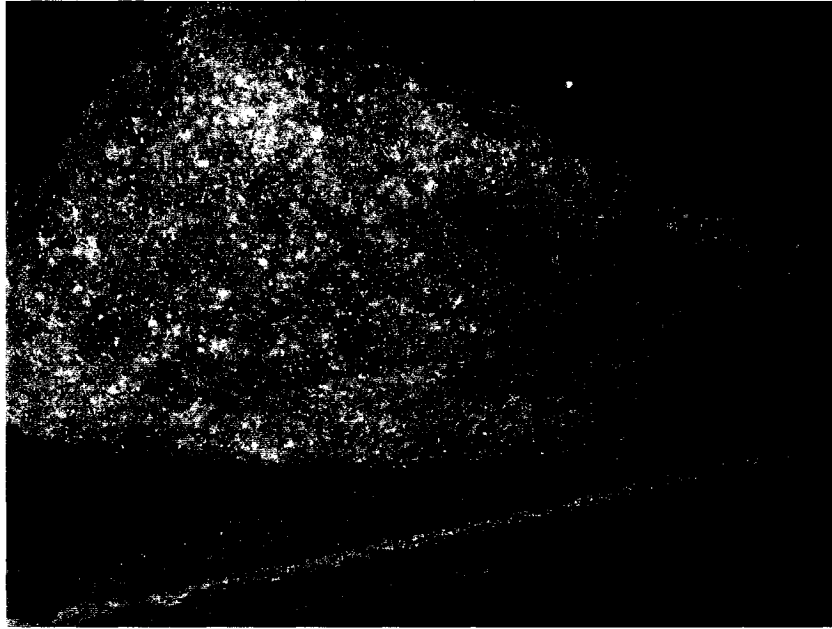
“Memorial”: Tel Tamar excavation near our desert home-- ceramic bowl shards, bus ticket, beach glass 1993 (Figure 9)



“Memorial”, detail: My sister and I and Ari the last time we were together in 1993, desert stones, Roman coins from around our home, Jordanian Dinar with King Hussein, Israeli Lira with mandala shape centre and the word peace
1994 (Figure 10)



“The Road to Peace”: Tel Aviv beach glass & Banana Beach ticket, bottle dating to British Mandate full of coloured desert sand
2004 (Figure 11)



“Memorial”: desert stone with IDF Paratrooper Insignia “Wings”, detail (Figure 12)



“The Road to Peace”: bus ticket, Tel Aviv beach glass, coloured sand bottle, stone with insignia, photo of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, 2004, detail (Figure 13).

[See Appendix 4 for Artist’s Statement on photos in this section]

This was an emotional evening and many of the MDG participants cried. One of the Palestinian members, Nada Sefian, commented on the fact that she had known me for some time but never knew this story I held inside. She was taken by surprise because she never suspected what I had lived through. It was not evident in my conduct within the MDG; how was it that I could be so positive and optimistic, especially after this kind of experience? The question and answer period and the hour-long conversations that ensued, in 10 smaller dialogue groups, were important because I felt that this group had witnessed my story. I also felt an incredible sense of support from the group, Arabs and Jews alike. This was another important breakthrough for me. I felt accepted. And as strange as this may seem, I also felt protected and sheltered by the group, Palestinians, Arab-Israelis, other Arabs, Israeli and non-Israeli Jews. As the evening came to a close, I realized how important it was for me to share this story on a public level, within this diverse group setting, and receive comments and feedback. Based on the feedback from this initial reading, I felt others could benefit from my lived experience and that such a presentation, depending on the context, could be a very powerful educational tool. I was using my experience as an example. I was able to take my life experience and turn it around in a positive direction. I could be very sad and emotional but I did not want to live with hatred and anger at the 'Other'. I wanted to find better ways to solve the conflict and this began by first and foremost trying to understand both sides' perspectives.

The presentation for the dialogue group was the underpinning, and gave me confidence to continue. I decided to develop my script further and incorporate three aspects that tie into the same general theme of overcoming adversity via dialogue, human connection and art.

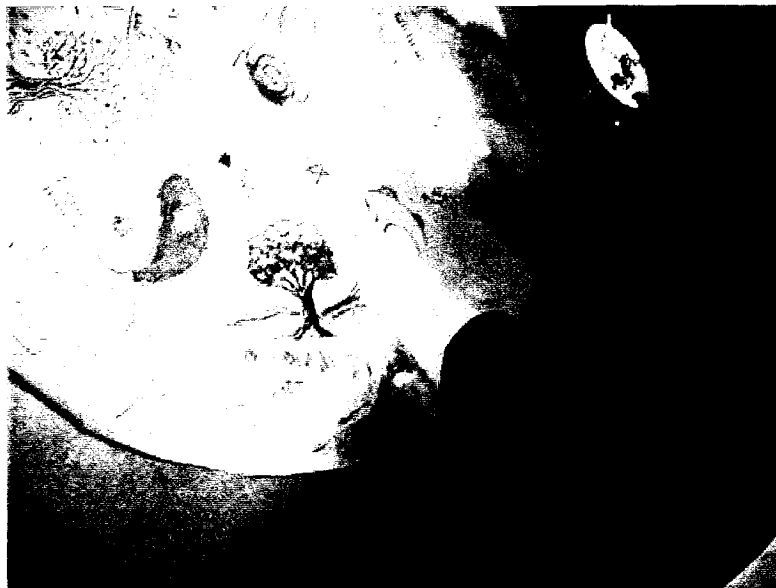
The three works are “The Burial of Awwad”, “For My Brother Ari” and “ To Stand in the Other’s Shoes, if Only Momentarily” (Appendix 3).

My participation with the MDG led to other art-based projects that focused on bringing Arabs, Palestinians and Jews together. In the fall of 2004, I was invited to lead a large art workshop with 120 participants, Palestinians, Arab-Israelis, other Arabs, Jews (Israeli and non-Israeli) and others. This took place at the Congregation Dorshei Emet, the Reconstructionist Synagogue in Montreal, in celebration of the Jewish holiday Sukkoth⁴². The project, “Sukkoth Shalom, Mandalas for Peace”, was to creating 12 large mandalas. Each table consisted of 10 multi-faith participants. The theme of the drawings dealt with how each participant views peace. The evening was an exciting experience for me because of the involvement and positive comments made by the guests. From this workshop, I was introduced to Helga Schleeh and the end result was a community-based summer art project that dealt with the topic of Arabs and Jews creating together and focusing on the conflict issues, the collective and individual impact, how we express it via art and how we incorporate our artwork towards resolving our experiences and working towards peaceful solutions for ourselves and others.

⁴² The word Sukkoth means booths. It is a Biblical pilgrimage festival, which occurs in autumn. The booths built by families for the holiday are reminiscent of the type of huts in which the ancient Israelis dwelt during 40 years of wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt, and reflect God’s benevolence in providing for all their needs in the desert.



Mandala Peace Project 2004 (Figure 14)



Mandala Peace Project 2004 (Figure 15)



Detail of Mandala drawing (Figure 16)



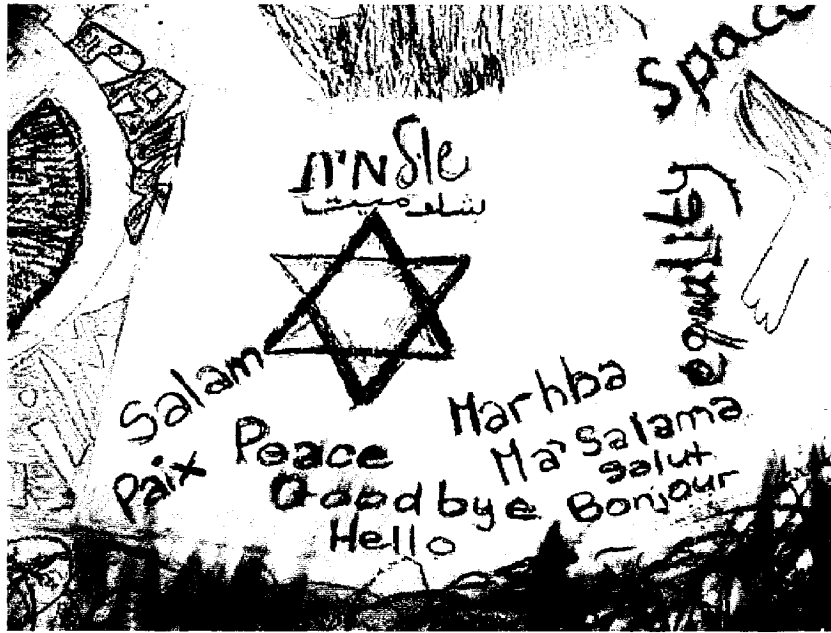
Detail of Mandala (Figure 17)



Large Mandala (Figure 18)



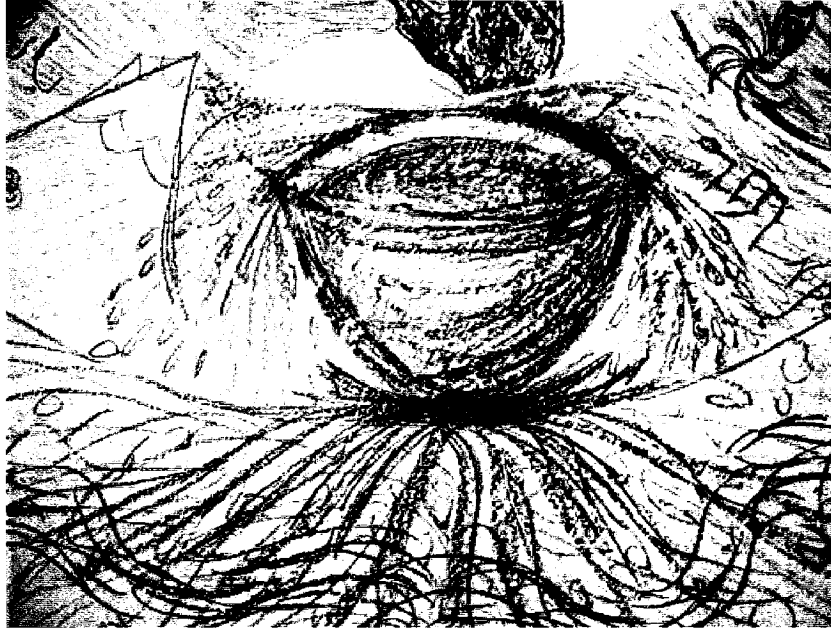
Detail of Mandala (Figure 19)



Children's Mandala, detail (Figure 20)



Children's Mandala, detail (Figure 21)



Mandala, detail (Figure 22)

Art Project: “Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East”, Summer 2005

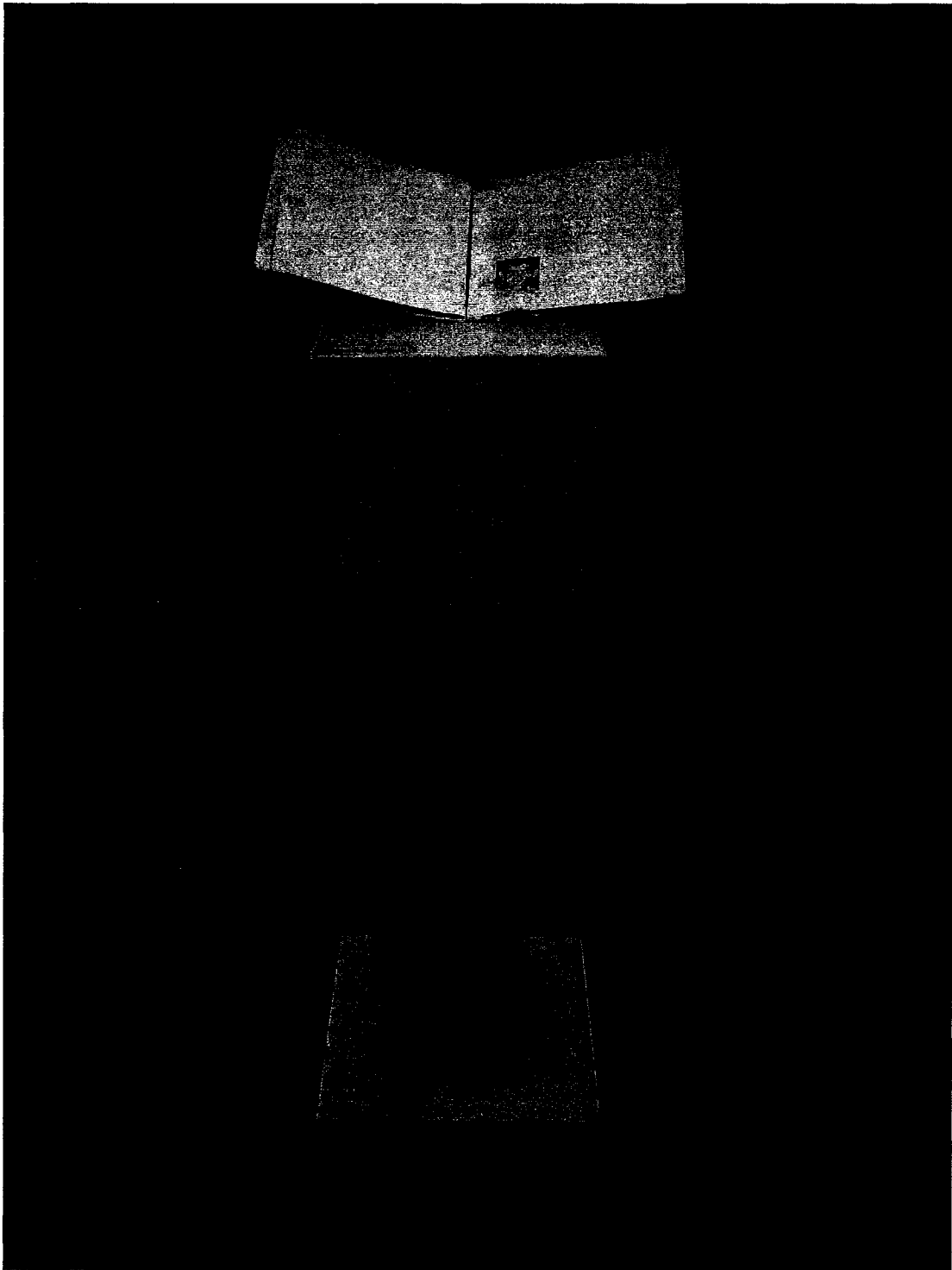
The art process began in the spring of 2005. The “Meeting in the Middle” project was a collaboration between Helga Schleeh, a Montreal-based artist who uses art for peace, and some members of the MDG. Schleeh organized and led the art sessions. I felt this could be an interesting addition to my ongoing research of using art to bring Arabs and Jews together. I began my own process within the group, of using art to connect with others. My previous plans went on hold as I delved deeper into the creative process that would continue for a period of three months. I was researching what I had seen and heard in Givat Haviva.

The ability to tap into emotional trauma and bring it to a shared experience with others is a familiar theme to me. Whether dealing with sexual abuse, death, an arranged marriage or religious coercion, the way I chose to deal with these situations is by talking about it,

to whoever would listen. The art project was a natural extension of what I was already doing both in my art production at Concordia University and within the MDG. The art group provided a framework that encouraged delving into personal stories and sharing them in a supportive environment of Arabs, Palestinians and Jews.

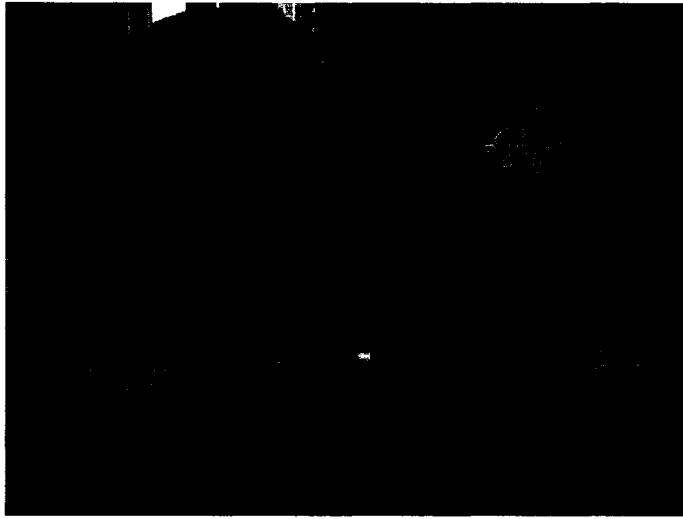
It is of interest to note that some of the participants in this project did not consider themselves artists. They were, however, willing and eager to explore the variety of projects presented. We met once a week, on Sundays for about four hours but, as you might expect, once the art production began, we often continued way beyond the closing time of the centre. We were engaged and immersed in the art. The sessions began with SchleeH introducing the project for that particular week. Sometimes, she would also introduce meditative or centering types of exercises before we all began to work. SchleeH brought this centering element into our group and guided the participants in creating an intention that would be the focal point of the art we were about to make. The weekly projects were diverse and gave the participants a variety of media to work with. We did hand and foot casting, mask making and papermaking with Arabic and Hebrew newspapers. We also made ceramic peace bowls⁴³ and some of the participants added their own work that dealt with the issues of the conflict and supported the concept of working towards peace in the Middle East.

⁴³ Peace Bowls, an art production that I began in the BFA program at Concordia University in 2003. They are an appropriation of “Incantation Bowls” that originated some 2000 years ago in Mesopotamia. Inscribed in Aramaic and Hebrew, they functioned as talismans to ward off evil spirits, protect the home and to aid in fertility.



“To Stand in the Other’s Shoes, If Only Momentarily”

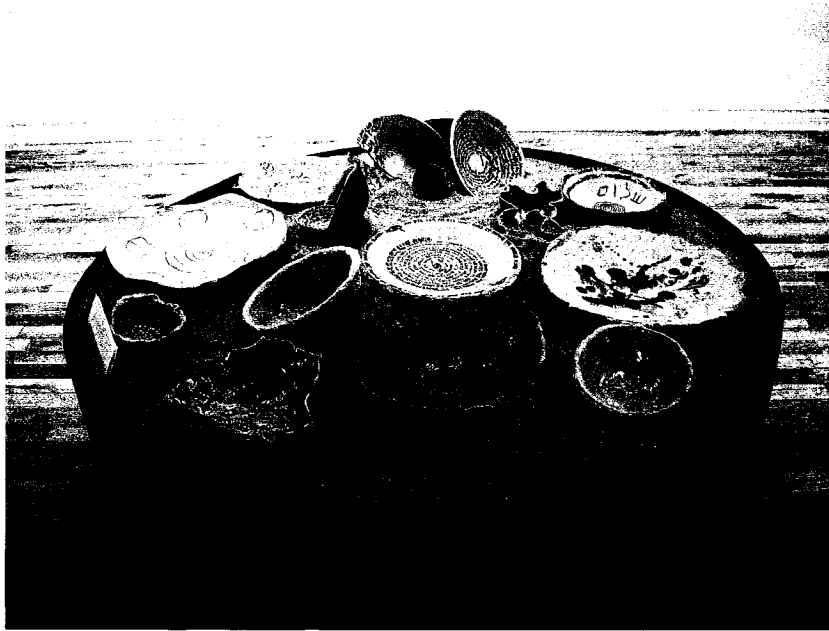
The book is handmade paper, created from Arabic and Hebrew newspaper pulp, the text is the performance piece and the feet are my own made of plaster casting (Figure 23)



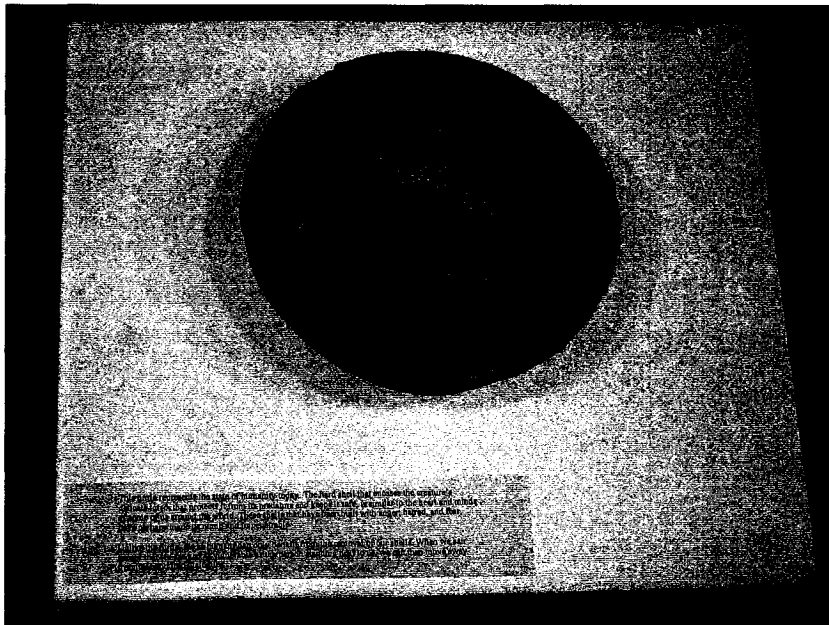
Mask making with plaster strips (Figure 24)



Group work: hand/face casting, lights made from Arabic and Hebrew newspaper pulp, Mandalas (Figure 25)



“Peace Bowls” ceramic series- Group Work, detail (Figure 26)



Shell
By Rudi Goodfriend (Figure 27)



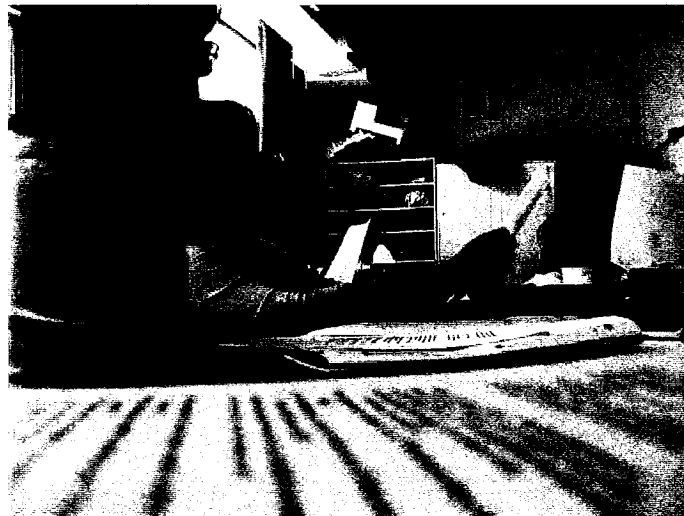
Group work, Palestinian Memories, detail (Figure 28)

For each project, we attempted to partner an Arab participant with a Jewish participant. The idea behind this was to give people the opportunity to work together and to share an intimate experience. The mask making, for example, seemed to be the most emotionally charged project. The participants commented that the person being masked was only able to listen and nod his or her head. Seeing and speaking were out of the question as the application of plaster bandages required them to be still. The participant who was applying the plaster was able to talk and share from his or her life stories. Total undivided attention was given to the speaker. This aspect of listening tied in nicely to the experiences within the dialogue group itself. During the meetings, one person at a time would speak so that everyone had an opportunity to express what he or she felt without being rushed or interrupted. The focus was on being truly attentive and respectful to the speaker and then commenting one at a time.

My experience in this art project was of gradually getting to know others on a deeper level and sharing in a collaborative process. The commitment to the project was to meet once a week. The weekly sessions provided a consistent structure that was important to both my artistic and social development. I was able to develop my own projects alongside other group members and share the process verbally. By meeting with them regularly, I developed friendships and felt comfortable talking openly about the issues that were of concern to me regarding the situation within Montréal's Arab, Palestinian and Jewish communities and the ongoing situation in Israel/Palestine. Sometimes we discussed art-related topics. At other times, we discussed world events, the Middle East conflict, news reports on demonstrations by Israelis, Arab-Israelis or Palestinians and the inevitable suicide bombings as well as the difficult situation for Palestinians living in the occupied

territories in Israel. The discussions were challenging and, at times, emotional. Because the setting was informal and we were involved with the art process as well, the participants commented openly and freely. There was lots of room for discussion. And there was time to be quiet, listen to others or be reflective.

Along with the art making and discussions, we began the process of writing our stories.



Narrative writing workshop (Figure 29)

For me, the short story writing was an ongoing process, one that I had begun two years prior. Now I could share my painful real-life stories with the participants of the art project. They wanted to hear what I had experienced and, in return, they wanted me to listen to them. Because of my previous experience with personal narrative I had a solid foundation that I could extrapolate from and by doing so further develop my concepts. I was also more confident. The writing I produced for the art project became a more cohesive and integrated body of work.

In time, I felt ready to present the written stories to the participants of “Meeting in the Middle” and then I was asked by Schleeh to present them publicly during the opening of our art exhibition. This would take the form of the two readings “ The Burial of Awwad” and “For My Brother Ari” and the performance piece “To Stand in the Other’s Shoes if Only Momentarily”. The performance was done with Nada Sefian, a Palestinian from the MDG and a participant in the “Meeting in the Middle” art group.

This idea of a public presentation was initially not an easy task for me to assume. First, I had to internalize what I was about to do publicly. Was I ready for this kind of sharing, and emotional expression of my grief? Were the group members ready to hear what I had to say and listen to all three readings in succession, in other words: the whole story? This was painful and emotional, where the private truly became public. I felt that sharing my background and childhood experiences, the underpinnings of how I arrived at the desire and idea of working towards peace, was important because it sheds light on where I am today. This realization of needing to share my stories was a long process; it did not happen overnight.

As the opening evening grew near, I began to experience inner turmoil and questions began to arise. How would I feel exposing the very personal, private feelings of losing a friend at 13 and losing my brother in a suicide bus bombing? The stories I had written were graphic accounts of the events as seen through my eyes. Was this even appropriate for a public performance?

This performance was open to the public, not only the MDG members. I would be moving out of my comfort zone. I would be sharing the stories with Palestinians and

other Arabs from the Montreal community who I did not know. I could also encounter disdain and disagreement from the Jewish community for metaphorically ‘standing in the other’s shoes’, the shoes of the Palestinian suicide bomber who killed my brother. I had no way of knowing how this would be received. Was it necessary to experience this public presentation of my work? Was this all a part of personal healing? Healing through dialogue and art?

Was I ready to embark on this process? The answer was a resounding “Yes!” After experiencing Playback Theatre⁴⁴, and five empowering years of personal artistic expression/development that came about as a student of Concordia University’s Bachelor of Fine Arts program and then the Masters in Art Education, I felt ready to move forward with the personal narrative and share with others what I had experienced and how it had impacted and changed me.

The answer was affirmative to the second question, “Would a public reading of my work be acceptable as the focal point for the vernissage of “Meeting in the Middle” and a resounding “no” to “Would the reading of my three stories be too long and too emotional for the public art exhibition opening?” Based on my presentation for the MDG, and the “Meeting in the Middle” art project, I felt ready. The presentation of all three stories together would be very powerful and provide the necessary developmental sequence to understand how I arrived at the point where I could actually perform “To Stand in the Other’s Shoes, if Only Momentarily”. In this performance I, the Jew, took the role of the

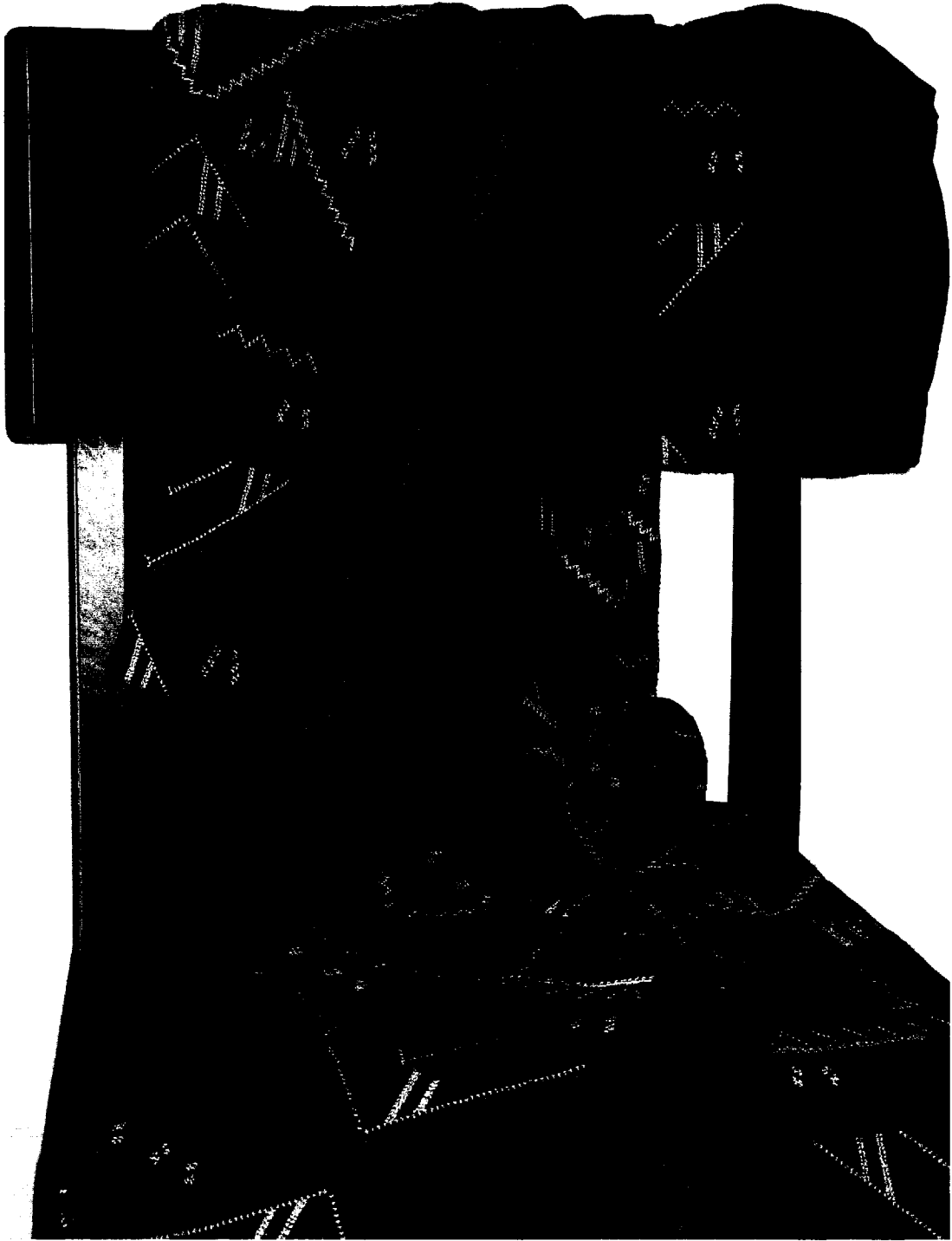
⁴⁴ Playback Theatre is form of improvisational theatre in which the audience or group members tell stories from their lives and watch them enacted on the spot. Whether in theatres, workshops, educational or clinical settings, Playback Theatre draws people as they see their common humanity. www.hvpi.net/playtheater.htm

suicide bus bomber, Ammar Amrana⁴⁵, rahimahu-Allah, who killed my brother, and Nada Sefian, the Palestinian, took the role of my brother, Ari Pearlmutter. The performance was about role reversal, and being able to see from another perspective. We were literally standing in the other's shoes. This was achieved through reversing roles and also by exchange of garments. Sefian took off the traditional Palestinian dress that she was wearing and gave it to me to put on. I took off the Israeli scarf and handed it to Sefian so that she could wear it.



“To Stand In The Other’s Shoes”: performance Tali and Nada (Figure 30)
(Photo by Ehab Lotayef)

45 Ammar was from the village of Yaabed, or Ya’bad, in the northern West Bank. He was member of the Hamas movement. Hamas, founded in 1987 by Sheik Ahmed Yassin, is an acronym in Arabic for Harakat al-Moqawamah al-Islamiyya or “The Islamic Resistance Movement”. They claimed responsibility for this first suicide bomb attack on civilians in which five people were killed on a bus in Hadera, Israel, 1994.



Palestinian Dress, detail (Figure 31)

This role reversal was a powerful tool in my reconciliation process. Writing out the text and creating the voice of Ammar, speaking to my brother Ari, was at first disturbing and painful. As I reworked and read the lines I began to integrate and internalize them. I thought about how Ammar might have felt. What drove him, at such a young age to become a human bomb? Slowly, painfully I was able to see from a different perspective. I selected two photos from the Hebrew newspaper *Maariv*⁴⁶, published the day after the bus bombing. One was of my brother Ari. The other was Ammar. Working with both images, simultaneously, was very difficult at first. I felt that I was disgracing my brother in some way. It was hard to even conceptualize that I could put both photos of these young men, side-by-side. But I did. I needed to work on these names, images and narratives at the same time. I needed to understand. I wanted to make sense of this tragedy, to figure out why it happened and could it be prevented in the future?

In working with Nada Sefian, the script became real. I had a Palestinian with whom I could role-play. I trusted her because of the relationship that developed in the MDG and that deepened during the summer art project. Yet, I was still very emotional and the process was draining. At times, working together and discussing the roles and their reversal evoked in me pain, sadness, fear and tension. I was not always sure or confident of the path I was pursuing. It was hard to move beyond the fear. But when I did, that is when the breakthrough happened. I was able to see and hear from another point of view. Nada was real; she was my partner with her own stories, pain and history. Nada told me that she was uncomfortable in the beginning assuming the role of a Jewish soldier. But

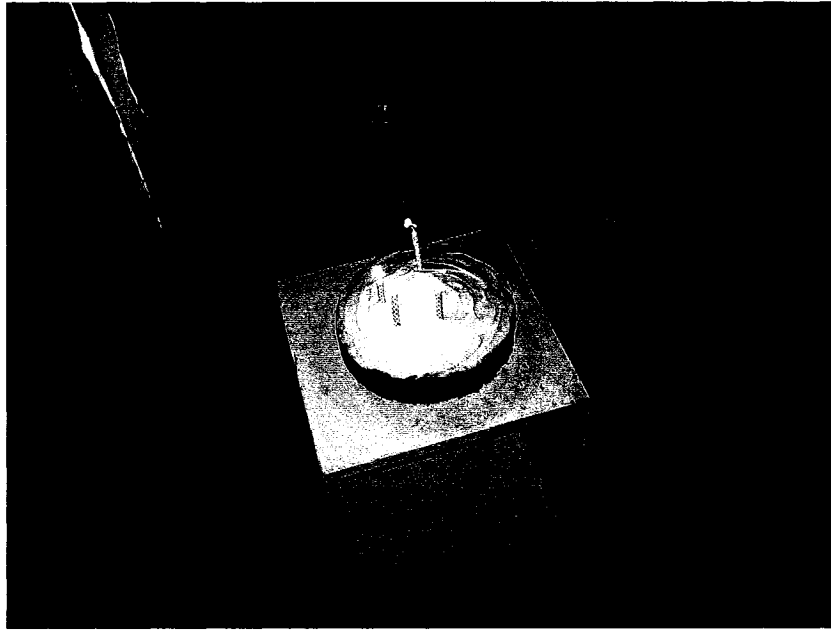
⁴⁶ A Hebrew term that means evening.

she also felt that it was an important role for her to assume as she worked with me. It was a difficult performance to do, but it was also healing for both of us.

The commencement of the art exhibition was August 4, 2005. I began my readings that evening with a dedication to my brother Ari. It was also his birthday, August 4; he would have been 30 years old.



Celebrating Ari's Birthday (Figure 32)



Celebrating Ari's Birthday (Figure 33)

As I began the readings, the audience fell silent. By the end, they were in tears. The hour-long performance was repeated for a second time that same evening. We had a full house and did not want to turn any of them away due to room capacity. It was difficult to do the performance the first time. To have to repeat it became, in some ways, even more challenging. Yet, I felt it was important, that we had worked so hard as a group and this was the culmination of all our efforts. It was also a platform to reach others and hopefully create a change for the better.

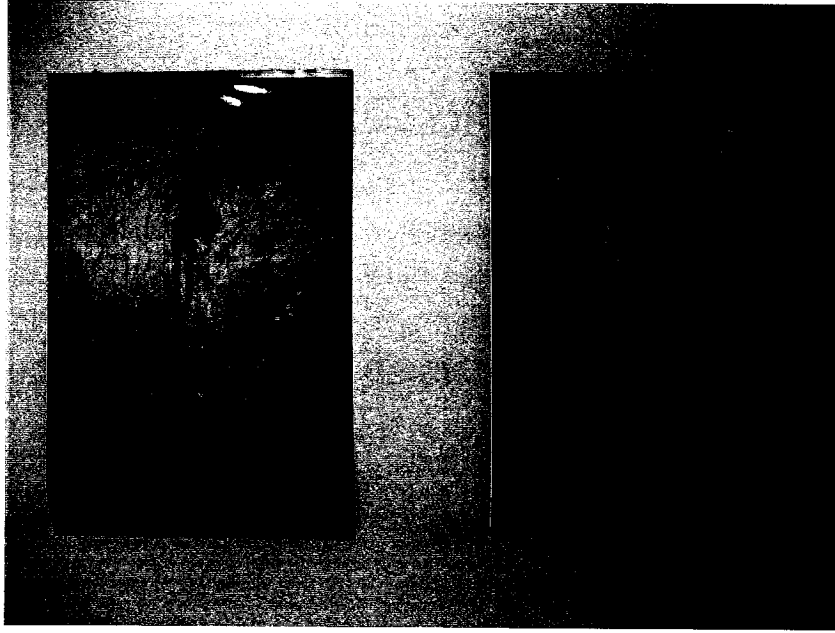
The feedback from the readings and the play were all supportive and positive. Some of the audience thanked us for opening up and sharing such a difficult topic. Others just wanted to talk about the experience and how we as a group were able to arrive at this juncture of Jews talking and creating with Arabs, Arab-Israelis and Palestinians. The artwork of "Meeting in the Middle" and the focus of the MDG were setting an example

of how Arabs, Arab-Israelis, Palestinians and Jews can come together in a shared experience that deals with the conflict issues and, through art and dialogue, gain deeper understanding and empathy towards one another.



Installation Space

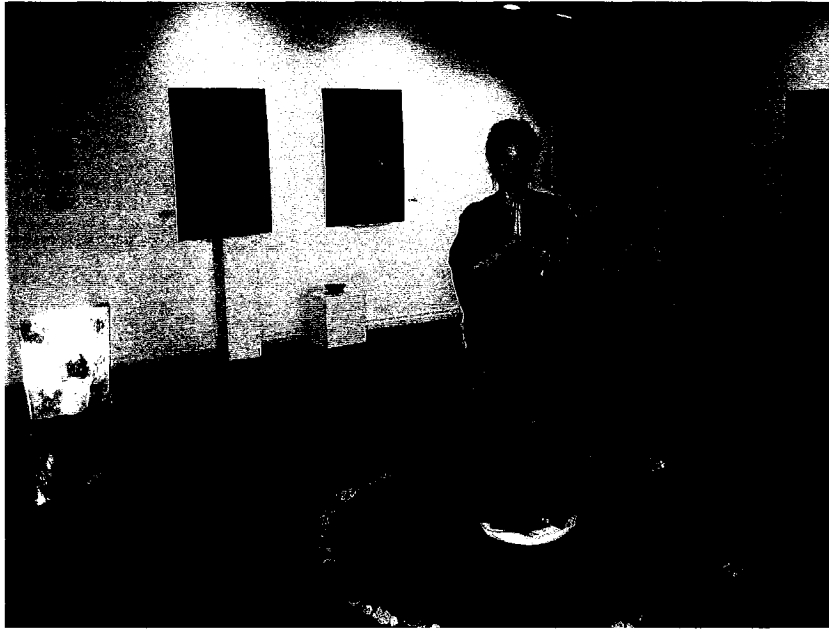
To Stand In The Other's Shoes if only Momentarily, Earth Mother Mezuzahs
and Sacred Spaces & Stone Stories by Tali Goodfriend
Peace Bowls by group (Figure 34)



Sacred Spaces & Stone Stories
Tali Goodfriend (Figure 35)



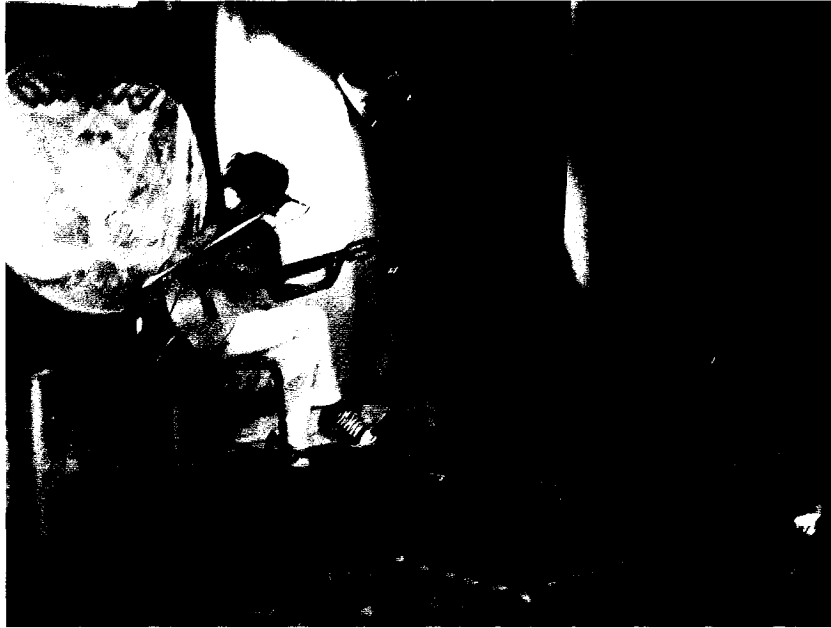
Sacred Space Welcoming Circle
Ceramic stone series with cushion
Tali Goodfriend (Figure 36)



Meeting in the Middle--personal sacred space (Figure 37)



Opening Evening Performance with Helga Schlee, standing to the left (Figure 38)



Arab and Jewish Performers (Figure 39)



The Vernissage at the Visual Arts Centre, Westmount (Figure 40)

Any time we take risks and especially ones that involve sharing difficult personal narratives, we open ourselves to the unknown reactions of the audience. I decided that I could take such a risk because of the previous support I received from the

professors/students at Concordia University, the MDG, and the support and friendships that had developed during the spring/summer art workshop of “Meeting in the Middle”. I would handle negative feedback, if it arose, as graciously as possible. I was not afraid of conflict or heated discussion. The MDG prepared me for this. I was coming from a place of sharing with others in order to heal and lead by my personal example. I was coming from a place of hope and reconciliation, letting go of fear, anger and sadness and replacing them with trust, love and joy. I was baring my soul and speaking my truth.

The process of being listened to and others bearing witness to my dialogue, writing, public sharing, and then venturing out into the community at large has been important in my own healing and in moving me forward. This process is ongoing and continues within my immediate family, my three adult children, and the ripple effect it has on my extended family and friends living in Montreal and Israel/Palestine as they share their concerns, disagreements, questions and, at times, support for what I am doing in Montreal. The process of putting on a public performance has proved to be an important element in my own healing and in how I am moving on to use my life experience in a constructive way. I can see this process as building blocks in healing. It is made up of several distinct aspects such as identifying the trauma and addressing it, taking life experience and expressing it through art, working on the issues that arise by dialoguing/writing, and then sharing it with others and having the work witnessed. At the end of this process, there is an emotional release and emotional fatigue that comes from addressing the issues and sharing the work. It has not been an easy path but the process has been an important one.

From an excerpt written for the MDG participation in the art exhibition:

This exhibition stemmed from a desire to connect with the ‘other’ on a very new and different level, that of creative human being. By working together on this stirring and often emotional exhibit, members of the MDG connected on levels not often explored during the regular dialogue meetings. Challenges and conflicts emerged that were often intense and we worked on them using dialogue and negotiation. We persisted, and the result is this truly inspiring and moving exhibit you see here.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Five explores my personal, research process of joining an Arab, Arab-Israeli, Palestinian and Jewish dialogue group in Montreal, Canada and the incredible, personal learning experiences that took place within the group. From the involvement with the MDG, the path was paved for a communal art project involving 120 participants from the Christian, Arab, Arab-Israeli, Palestinian and Jewish communities; it was “Sukkoth Shalom, Mandalas for Peace”. From there, I was invited to participate in another community based art project titled “Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East”. In the following and concluding Chapter Six, I discuss the general findings of the research from the art projects. I look at how my personal narratives and experiences contribute to the process of making friendships within the dialogue group and within the various art projects. I bring all of the elements together in order to create the mosaic of my life experiences thus far.

Chapter 6

General Findings

I began my journey by wanting to understand how art can assist in the process of bringing people together. This brought me to Givat Haviva and the photography project “Through Others’ Eyes”. Upon returning from Israel, I felt the desire to be an active participant in the process, not merely an outside observer. I joined the MDG. At the end of my first year with the MDG, some of the members, myself included, joined the spring/summer art project “Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East”.

The Meaning for Art Education

My own experience of using dialogue and art parallels the experience of the students from Givat Haviva. By working together in a joint art project, I got to know the participants on a deeper level. For me this was achieved by working side-by-side and sharing in an art experience. The art process helped me get in touch with my inner workings. Through art, I tapped into that which I was unaware of, and the unaware became visible in my art⁴⁷. For Tzlil Sharuki and Hanan Abu-Fanna, working in small groups and pairing up one Arab-Israeli and one Jew, helped them to slowly build friendships and working relationships. By getting to know each other, they broke down the prejudices and stereotypes they had about each group.

⁴⁷ The artistic production I created in 2003 titled: “Earth Mother Mezuzahs” helped me reconnect with my own voice and aspects of my femaleness. Through this artwork I was able to alter the imbalance of power I had felt as a young girl growing up in a patriarchal society and tell a new story one that is empowering to me. Another example is the story of my Bedouin friend Awwad. I had suppressed this story for so long but through the creative process it eventually surfaced and I began to deal with it on an emotional level and heal.

It was important to have the regular weekly meetings, like at Givat Haviva and the MDG, as they provided consistency and structure in order to pursue the creative process and reinforce the concepts we were working on, to build friendships and have time to talk. We, at the MDG, were more comfortable addressing emotional issues because of the regular sessions, which gave people the opportunity to carry on where they had left off. Not all participants were available every week but the ones that came regularly felt that this aspect added to the experience. In our art group, “Meeting in the Middle”, we had Helga Schlee, who organized and coordinated the artistic aspects of the project and, at times, played the role of ‘facilitator’. She was called upon to help the participants work through some issues and come to an amicable agreement⁴⁸. But other participants also served in this role, either due to their professional background, involvement with the MDG or because they were able to use negotiation skills and common sense. For the students of Givat Haviva, Tzlil Sharuki and Hanan Abu-Fanna, having a trained facilitator helped them open up and deal with difficult issues surrounding the Middle East conflict. Otherwise, they might not have delved into the issues. The biases and prejudices were unravelling because the students were talking and dealing with their fears and mistrust. They were also simultaneously building friendships.

Etti Amram reinforced the importance of the mediator’s role in the process of dialoguing during group sessions. The art teachers concurred that they see the mediator as an important element in helping the students open up and express their feeling and concerns as they work in the art program.

⁴⁸ The vocabulary used to describe the artwork and the focus of this production needed to be addressed and accepted by all participants. For example: Jews refer to the land of Israel, Palestinians call it Palestine. Another area was the type of art we would create and the conflict issues we would address and how would we set up the exhibition in the gallery to reflect the needs/ideas of the artists.

As an art educator, I have learned the importance of combining art, dialogue, and writing with individual, small group and large group art projects. They help us tap into the issues that we feel are important. They help us open up and listen to what others have to say and what they have experienced. When the issues are emotional and touch on areas that are personal, cultural, religious or political, having a trained facilitator/mediator to guide the participants is vital. From my perspective, participating in a diverse group helps bring up all sorts of issues. But in order to go deep inside and bring up the difficult and painful issues that we want to address, we need to feel safe. I believe that is why a mediator is paramount. They help guide us into the places that may be threatening or scary. Then we can bring up the issues in a safe space and work on them. Once this is done, the mediator can then bring us safely out and back to solid ground. In that way, when we are finished with the session or workshop we might feel emotional and distressed but also protected and secure by having the mediator support.

Every art project that attempts to bring Arabs, Arab-Israeli, Palestinians and Jews together for the purpose of getting to know one another and breaking down biases is a positive step⁴⁹. My experience has taught me that it is possible to create inner peace from fear and hate, to change the negative into the positive, and to use our tragedies as lessons on how to relate with others and move beyond anger, blame and feeling victimized.

By working towards understanding others, and ourselves we begin to realize that we are capable of changing how we view a situation. By sharing our viewpoint and ideas, we

⁴⁹ From my personal experience within the MDG and the other art projects, along with the research for this thesis, my findings are: when people get to know one another and have an opportunity to dialogue, express themselves and be witnessed, each side has the chance to see the other with their similarities and differences, hopes and dreams. This may be a slow process but one that opens new ways of perceiving and hopefully finding solutions for coexistence.

feel heard and acknowledged. The hope for a better future comes from our ability to be active in society and feel that we can contribute to the kind of community in which we want to live. This is the beginning and an important place to start but there is more. The studies that I researched come from societies that practise democracy. The citizens have a voice and the right to be active in the destination of their country. It is important that all of the people living in the society feel that they have equal rights, that they can have an effect on their life and the destiny of their children. These elements, in my opinion, are the underpinnings that people need in order to establish basic human rights, social justice and a more peaceful society for all its members. I believe that many paths can lead us to the road of commencing dialogue, understanding and acceptance of others. Whether using photography, creative writing, mandala drawings, dialoguing or educating towards peaceful relationships through making origami, all of these areas build on making personal connections, creating friendships, validating each other and being open to hearing another perspective. They are an excellent place to start and begin to look at and understand the whole picture. Because, without addressing the whole picture and its complexity of issues, it would be presumptuous of me to think that art is all we need in order to restore a peaceful coexistence within ourselves, with others, within the Middle East or elsewhere.

Empathy is an important aspect in beginning to understand another's perspective and situation. In listening to the narrative of another person, we begin to realize that everyone has a story, a belief system, fears and hurts, needs and dreams. By empathizing with the other, we begin to open our eyes, ears and hearts. This can lead to acknowledging and legitimizing the other. All projects like "Through Others' Eyes", "Standing in the Other's

Shoes, if Only Momentarily”, “Meeting in the Middle” or dialoguing within the MDG, work to create human connections and build friendships. This, I strongly believe, is the road to a more peaceful coexistence.

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Appendix 1

טופס הסכם למשתתפים במחקר

בזה אני מצהיר/ה שאני מסכים/מסכימה להשתתף במחקר המבוצע על ידי סאלי (טלי) קלמונס - גודפרינד כחלק מעבודת התואר השני שלה (Masters), שנעשה בהנחית ד"ר לורי בליר, מהמחלקה לחינוך באוניברסיטת קונקורדיה, מונטריאול, קוויבק, קנדה.

א. המטרה:

הוסבר לי שמטרת המחקר היא לבדוק את סוגי הפרויקטים באמנות בהם השתמשו בבית הספר ואיך משתמשים בבית הספר, באמנות כמכשיר לפיתוח הבנה וסובלנות בין קבוצות שיש ביניהן עימותים; במחקר זה הקבוצות שביניהן יש עימותים הן של ישראלים ופלשתינאים.

ב. התהליך:

כחלק מהמחקר יראיינו אותי שעה או שעתיים במקום בו אבחר. עורכת המחקר תקליט ו/או תצלם בווידאו את הראיונות. עורכת המחקר גם תבקש לצפות במספר שעורי אומנות, שאיש חינוך מעביר ולצלם בווידאו את התהליך.

הראיונות יבחנו את הדרך בה אמנות ופרויקטים באמנות משמשים להגדלת הסובלנות בין סטודנטים ישראלים ופלשתינאים;

איך המורה לאמנות מחליט מהו פרויקט האמנות המסוים בו ישתמש?
אילו יתרונות יש לסוג אחד של התבטאות אומנותית על סוגים אחרים?
אילו צורות התבטאות אחרות משולבות עם האמנות?
איך התכנית מתחילה ומסתיימת?

האם העבודה האומנותית הגמורה תוצג בתערוכה?
אילו אפשרויות להמשך המעקב ינתנו לסטודנטים?

עורכת המחקר תשאל על המעורבות המקצועית שלי באמנות, איך אני נשארת/ממוקדת/ת כאשר האקלים הפוליטי שמסביבי אינו שלו?
איך השימוש באמנות, ככלי להגדלת הסובלנות, שינה את השקפותי אם יש לו השפעה (חיובית או שלילית) בהשגת המטרה?
עורכת המחקר תשאל אותי על מטרותי בחיים, הערכים שלי, דברים המעניינים אותי ותקוותי לעתיד.

עבודת המחקר אינה חסויה, אך אם גילוי זהותי יכול לגרום נזק לעצמי או לאחרים הנמצאים תחת חסותי, שם פיקטיבי יכתב במקום שמי.

ג. תנאי ההשתתפות

- אני מבין/ה שאני יכול/ה, בכל זמן, לחזור בי מהסכמתי ולהפסיק את השתתפותי במחקר, ללא תגובה שלילית כלפי.
- אני מבין/ה שהשתתפותי במחקר אינה חסויה (לדוגמה: אהיה מזוהה בתוצאות המחקר, אלא אם כן אבקש, שלא אהיה מזוהה).
- אני מבין/ה שתוצאות המחקר יפורסמו.

**קראתי בתשומת לב את הנ"ל ואני מבין/ה את ההסכם.
מרצוני החופשי ובהתנדבות אני מסכים/ה להשתתף במחקר.**

שם (בבקשה לכתוב באותיות ברורות) _____

חתימה _____

אם יש לך אלו שאלות לגבי זכויותיך כמשתתף במחקר, אנא התקשר עם
Adela Ried, research Ethics and Compliance Officer,
Concordia University tel. 514 – 848-7481
או באי-מייל
aried@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix 2

Excerpts from my traveling Journals

May 5, 2004.

I am on my way to meet with Etti Amram, the director of the Givat Haviva Art Centre. This is my first visit so naturally I'm a bit nervous and also unsure of how long this trip will take. I made an appointment for around noon. I hope I gauged the traveling time. I boarded the bus # 394 from Eilat to Be'er Sheva via the Arava. I get on the bus at Ovot; this is located in the Arava Desert (this is where I grew up and I have been staying there with my mom). I reach Be'er Sheva by 8:30 a.m. and the train to Tel Aviv leaves by 8:44. My destination is north of the Tel Aviv station. I will get off at Pardes Hannah. From the train station I'll figure out how to get to Givat Haviva. The train ride is a new Israeli experience for me and I love it! The train is cool, clean and very comfortable. I found out that Bombardier in Montreal made the trains! The ride is beautiful. We wind through the northern desert and Bedouin tents and grazing goats dot the landscape. Farther north, lush fields of spring crops are neatly put together like a patchwork quilt and extend as far as the eye can see. I am thankful to have this quiet time so that I can collect my thoughts and prepare for the interview. I arrive at the station and one of the station workers says he will call a taxi for me. It is a 20-minute ride to Givat Haviva. The taxi driver begins asking me all kinds of questions about my visit to Givat Haviva. He also gives me his card and tells me that I can count on him to pick me up when I'm finished, just call the cell phone number. He becomes my driver for the duration of my visits. My sister later told me that

he would follow me all around Israel because I gave him such good tips! So I had a reliable taxi and eventually, through our conversations, discovered, like most encounters in Israel, that we had mutual friends living in the Arava, small world!

The taxi arrives at the gates of Givat Haviva by 11:30, great timing as far as I'm concerned! A security guard approaches and asks me with whom do I have an appointment. He instructs me on how to find Etti. I am welcomed with the fragrance of lush vegetation, and flowers. As I begin to walk around the campus I see lawns and beautiful trees with lots of shade and a gentle calm washes over me in these tranquil surroundings.

Appendix 3

The Burial of Awwad, rahimahu-Allah

This life experience is based on factual events that happened in the Arava Desert in Israel when my friend Awwad and I were about 13 years old.

The army jeep driving fast with a cloud of dust trailing behind pulls up to the kibbutz dining room. The driver and an army officer jump out. The expression on their faces is grim. They say “shalom” and I reply “shalom”. They need to speak with my father. I feel something is wrong. My body feels strange, jittery and frightened. My heart is racing and I’m breathing fast. Running barefoot out the door, I go straight to the office. My dad is talking on the Motorola walkie-talkie. “The army is here, something is wrong, they want to talk with you.” We walk back to the dining room. The officer asks if my dad knows the Bedouin family that lives near us. “Yes” “Would you be able to identify the children?” I say “Yes” because I know them all, and a few of them go to school with me. “Can you speak Arabic?” “Yes, I can get by.” “Would you be willing to help Ali by driving with him to identify one of his boys?”

“What happened?” “Last night an infiltrator crossed over from Jordan into Israel. “Ali’s son Awwad, the goat herder, was murdered out in the desert while he was sleeping.” What! Killed? No way. Awwad? I am shaking. My stomach is cramping. Dead? Killed. I feel scared, nervous, and have a rush of adrenalin. I need to do something, run somewhere. “Ali needs to identify his son and prepare for the burial.” My dad and I both answer, “Yes, we will go”.

Ali arrives in an army jeep. He is dressed in the usual black robe and kafia head covering. He is quiet, very slow moving, and looking at the ground. The Peugeot van is waiting. I sit in between my dad and Ali. I stay as small as I can, all crunched up not to touch Ali. The two-hour drive towards Tel Aviv is very

quiet. No one speaks. It is a hot summer day. The van cabin is full of smells: sweat, campfire, cigarettes and goats, all mixed together. We arrive and park. The morgue is a grey building. Some people come to meet us. Walking down the long corridor, I translate for Ali. We are close to the room. I feel fear, nausea and disbelief. We enter the room. I look at the floor. Questions bring me back. I translate. The smell in the room is strong. Maybe it is bleach, or some kind of disinfectant. I don't want to look at my friend. I am scared. No, terrified. But I also want to see. His body is half covered with a sheet, very small and still. I see the slash on his neck. I turn away. I am trembling. I want to throw up. There is a buzz in my ears. Others are talking beside me. Awwad's face brown, blotchy, swollen and his eyes, oh my god, they are bulging. I can't look and I can't look away. Is it Awwad? Yes, I recognize his dark hair and I know his body, his rough hands. I'm relieved that his private parts are covered. He would be so embarrassed if I saw him naked. We identify the boy. The sight, the smells, all of this hits me. I want to leave. We do. We sign papers, and I translate. Ali is very quiet. The drive home is numbing. No one is speaking. My mind is racing. What next?

The boy is brought back to his desert home. A special burial ceremony takes place. Many Bedouin tribe leaders, the army and my family are here. The sun is setting; the boy is wrapped and put into the back of a jeep with his family. We are near Ein-Tamid, a fresh water spring. The jeeps stop. A small hilltop is the burial ground. Ali and Mohamed, his brother, carry the boy's small body, and very gently lay him down on the ground where he is buried according to Bedouin custom. They place large stones on the grave. We are sitting down around the stones. Talking Arabic, Hebrew and English, smoking, shaking heads and some tears. The night is pitch black, a warm breeze is blowing, and the sky is clear and strewn with stars. I feel very close to my Bedouin friends. I feel sad and angry that Awwad was so brutally murdered. Why? He was 13 and so am I.

For My Brother Ari zl

Sitting around the small preschool tables at Vanier College, Montreal, the student educators and I are talking about the sugaring off field trip we just came back from this morning. We had so much fun with the kids! The children have gone home but we are full of excitement and the need to talk!

My office phone rings. On the other end is Bob, a friend from Israel who is living in Ottawa. "Tali, you need to sit down because what I have to say is going to be difficult for you." My mind begins to race; what is he saying? What is difficult? Is this a joke? I feel a surge of adrenalin. My body is on alert... I pull out the office chair and sit down but this does not feel real, what is going on... it seems like forever. Bob says, " This morning around 9 a.m. Ari was boarding the bus at the Hadera bus station. He was on his way to the memorial service for his army friend... He was on the bus when a few minutes later a suicide bus bomber got on the bus through the back doors and seconds later he blew himself up. Ari was also killed in the explosion. I know you will want to go back home to Israel for the funeral so stay on the line and you will talk to the Israeli Consul General.

My body is shaking. I feel cold and my mind is blank... my stomach is tight and as my hands tremble, thoughts bring me back... what just happened? What did Bob say? Is this real? Did this really happen? Ari, how can this be? I just spoke to you and visited with you for the first time in 10 years! How can you be dead? Where are you right now? Who is taking care of you?? Are you whole? Are you bleeding?

The voice on the phone says... "Tali, this is the Israeli Consulate. We are sorry for the loss of your brother Ari. First, do you need support right now? Can I call your husband? A friend? I can also send over someone from the consulate. How can I help you right now?" I respond: "I'm OK, I'm at work and my friends are here. But what do I do now? I feel very confused and I'm not thinking straight.

How do I get home to Israel?” “OK, listen, you go home, get ready, pack some clothes. You are booked on Air Canada, the 6:00 o’clock flight from Dorval to Toronto. All arrangements have been made. Shalom and we are very sorry for your loss. I respond and say: Shalom.

The next part is a blur of hugs and words of comfort from the CEGEP professors. I take my keys and collect my jacket. Driving home, I’m trying to understand... home... call the kids school, tell them what has happened... Josh, my youngest son, is home. He is 13... he helps me pack some clothes in a bag... we hug and move around not really knowing what is needed... I’m feeling very numb and shaky. I find some money, my Israeli passport and a few belongings.

It’s 6 p.m. CFCF evening news is on just as I take my seat on the plane. I see the report on the bus bombing. I see a soldier. He is near the back portion of the destroyed bus. He is lying face-upwards outside on the asphalt. I know instinctively that this is my brother Ari, he is all alone ... I want to reach out and touch him, hold him and be with him. Why is no one there with him? Why is he all alone? His body is partially covered with an army blanket... my need to be with him right there, right now is overwhelming... the news is over... I need to see it again. I am alone, how do I do this? Who do I talk to? I begin to cry, the tears won’t stop, they just keep coming.

In Toronto, an Israeli security personnel meets me on the plane before everyone gets off. I’m crying, my eyes are blurry, my mind numb... people, movement-- from here to there, the security personnel holds my arm and walks me... papers, stamped, move on quickly... I just trust the security guy, I can’t think anymore...

Lod Airport, Israel, the army officer is standing in front of me here in the first class section of the El Al plane. “Tali, we will drive you straight down to the Arava to be with your family. Try to get some rest. The drive will be about four

hours. We will go via Be'er Sheva". The army jeep is waiting right outside the airplane. We get in and drive away.

I awake as we pull into the settlement. The jeep is driving fast and dust is trailing behind us. The jeep comes to a full stop and it seems like hundreds of mourners surround us. Momentarily, my youngest brother Dari greets me and we embrace with tears and choked sobs. Then out of the desert darkness comes Fraza, the mother of Awwad, my Bedouin friend who was murdered. She holds me tight and comforts me. We cannot speak but just embrace, our bodies trembling and feeling all the shared pain. We hold on, not wanting to let go and, all the while, moving together into the house where my parents are sitting *shiva*.

To Stand in the Other's Shoes if Only Momentarily

Nada says:

Shalom, my name is Ari.

The morning bus is noisy and full of people. I am in my army uniform and on my way to visit the grave of my army friend. I am 19½. My friend from the base is with me just outside the bus. I hand him my bus pass through the open window, he boards the bus but... the driver realizes what we are up to, shit we're busted... the driver is yelling: Off the bus, off the bus! If you don't have your pass you can't get on!!

Today is a sad day, national memorial day... remembering...but it is also April. It is springtime. The girls are pretty and the air is full of fragrance. Do you see me; here in the back of the bus? I wish we could meet under different circumstances. We could talk about music, girls, sports or maybe art--I like that topic. What about traveling? Where would you go?? An exotic place like the Orient, with new foods, smells and tastes?

Tali says:

Salaam, I am Ammar.

Okay, that was easy...I just got through the last checkpoint ... I am sweating...I am steps away from meeting you. I am 25... I have said goodbye to my family, friends... I don't see another way. I am tired of living in Ya'abed... tired of being a refugee...tired of not having work... tired of the poverty, fighting, bombing and killing. I'm tired of the checkpoints and showing papers. Stupid papers, long hot lines.... Yelling, pulling pushing... My family will get some compensation from this deal... I am a martyr whatever the hell that means! But, I really don't see another way.

Will you see me, recognize me? The explosives are tightly taped to my body. I feel the tightness around my torso. It's hard to breathe. I am nervous, scared and

way beyond words... my body is shaking... my shirt is wet with perspiration... my mind races. I have a constant stream of thoughts... images, snapshots of my mom, brother, father and friends.

Noise, lots of people pushing to get on the bus... the driver is yelling at an Israeli soldier and getting him off the bus... they are arguing...

Gaii, the soldier and the bus driver are spared from death.

Nada:

You know Ammar, at 13 I experience my first Intifada. I begin to hate you. And I know that someday I'll be a soldier.

Tali:

And Ari, at 19 I lost my best friend when the Israeli tanks rolled into Gaza. It was a dummy bullet but it can kill. So much blood... so much pain... so much anger...

Nada:

Wow, that is sad, listen to this, I had a similar experience of losing a close friend: at 17 Sa'ar and I are traveling in Crete. Sa'ar is terribly injured in a motorcycle accident. He was driving just in front of me; as I hold him in my arms, I realize my life has been spared... he will never serve in the army, never marry or have a family. Our plans together for the future evaporate into thin, hot air...

Tali:

And now at 24 I'm thrust into revenge and I deal with my anger by joining the Hamas movement. I carry a gun and get strong by working out with dumbbells made from a water pipe and two olive cans filled with cement. My uniform is faded and worn but I feel that I belong.

Nada:

And for me, at 18 I join the army... I train hard and get stronger. I am a paratrooper with a red beret and an insignia with wings. Ammar, how I wish we would meet under different circumstances... I will order the coffee...Sugar? Cream? Cake? Maybe we can go to Tel Aviv and eat hummus and pita at the Banana Beach restaurant. They make really good steaks and salads too; don't forget to bring some photos of your girlfriend... we will talk and laugh.

Nada:

Dear friend... this is not to be. Our eyes meet, we ignite and our world changes forever.

Tali:

Dear friend... this is not to be. Our eyes meet, we ignite and our world changes forever.

Appendix 4

Artist Statement: Box Installations Triptych.

The piece is both a performance and installation. The triptych represents: 1. Distant: past memories 2. Recent: memories 3. Current: reflections. Each box holds within objects, photos, and mementos connected to a particular time period. By presenting them in this way, I am evoking the memories attached to them and introducing their story to the viewer.

The first box, titled “Ari’s Joy”, is memories from my brother’s childhood. It contains a drawing of an airplane done by my brother, Ari, when he was 5 and I was his preschool teacher. The snapshot is Ari and his friends in that same school playground. The ceramic tile is from the Gaza Strip. It represents a peaceful time, a time when commerce and camaraderie was evident. The tile was part of our beautiful schoolroom floor. Our family built this school and laid the tiles and we were very proud. The toy car represents Ari’s love for motorcycles and driving it fast in the desert. He loved doing this as a teenager. The garment bag was a gift from my Bedouin friend Fraza. I was there to comfort her after the murder of her 13-year-old son Awwad. He was my friend, we were both 13 and I helped bury him. Fraza was there for me when my brother was killed. It was the night of my brother’s funeral. I had missed the burial by several hours because I was traveling from Montreal via Toronto to Israel. The army jeep that brought me from the airport to the desert had just left. I was standing outside amidst my family and friends when out of the desert darkness came Fraza to hold me and comfort me. We could not speak but just

held each other, our bodies trembling and feeling all that pain. We cried and held on tight, not wanting to let go.

The second box is about our family reunion and the last time I was with my brother, in the summer of 1993. I had not seen him for about 11 years. My return home was for the purpose of *shalom bait* or creating peace in the family. The next day, as I walked Ari to the early morning bus stop in Jerusalem, he said to me “Tali, we need to get our family back together. You feel the same way so let’s work on it”. Those last words still resonate with me and I have worked hard to fulfill our dream. The Roman coins, ceramic shards and Byzantine glass were found near our kibbutz in the Arava Desert. The bark branches are from desert shrubs and the small wooden vase is another found relic from our desert playground. The money bills, one Jordanian with King Hussein from 1993 and one Israeli with Peace written on it from 1958 represents our proximity and historical connection between Arabs and Jews. Our home in the desert faced the Jordanian mountains and our Bedouin friends, Ali, Frazza and Swellma, originally came from there. This box was the beginning of the triptych piece. It emerged out of my need to create a special shrine or altar to place material objects that would remind me of Ari. It is titled “Memorial”.

The third box is my return home in the spring of 2004. It was the tenth-year memorial service for my brother. It was about connecting emotionally, physically and spiritually to my family, the desert, and my history. The wine-coloured cloth represents the paratrooper’s red beret. The desert stone has an image that refers to the Israeli Army Paratrooper insignia: spread wings, worn by my brother. The ceramic shards were excavated from our desert home. That was the same period my brother was killed by a

suicide bus bomber. The bus tickets purchased for Be'er-Sheva to the Arava are a reminder that each time I get on a bus, the memory is always there. The small glass bottle dating back to the British Mandate in Israel is full of coloured sand from the desert. I titled it: "The Road to Peace". The desert sand cave referring to a natural shrine is a project that I have been working on in my ongoing studio production. This ties into my creating a special place to store memories of Ari. This box is titled "The Road to Peace".

The performance is an important aspect to the piece and I am juxtaposing specific issues such as: Inside the box versus outside, hope and despair, Palestinian and Israeli, soldier and suicide bomber, life and death, love and hate, conflict and coexistence.

The narrators are Nada from Lebanon and Tali from Israel. We are reversing the roles. Nada will represent the Jewish reader and take the part of my brother Ari. I will represent the Arab reader and take the part of the suicide bomber, Ammar. This role reversal signifies "standing in the other's place" or "standing in the other's shoes". It emphasizes the possibility to see from another's perspective if only for a fleeting moment. It offers us the experience of empathy and the embracing of all humanity. It is also part of my ongoing healing process and the importance of seeing the "other" and hopefully creating a different way for us to walk in the world. The sculptural piece titled "The souls of our feet" is a symbolic reference to creating change by walking on a different path. It is in our power to create change.

The concepts I have used in my box installation are found in the work of Joseph Cornell. The script for the dialogue has its roots in a poem written after the First World War and,


more recently, in a collection of writings done by students who represent both Jewish and Arab backgrounds titled “Yalla” or let’s go!

Appendix 5



The Full Circle Mandala Project

The Full Circle Mandala Project is a community-based art project that aims to create a sense of connection and belonging among people of diverse backgrounds and cultures. We will be creating a large-scale artwork centered on the form of the mandala - ancient sacred artwork prevalent in many societies based on the equality of the circle. There will be two and three dimensional art workshops with well established professional artists/teachers, writers, papermakers and photographers, Your voice is important, and you will be encouraged to tell your story through writing and art. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST TO PARTICIPATE**, Inscription is on a first come/first serve basis, **INFORMATION MEETING - SUNDAY, MARCH 20, AT 2 P.M.** 350 Victoria Ave in Westmount. **WEBSITE: www.fullcirclemandala.com** or **HELGA SCHLEEH 514 484 9314**



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Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East
at the McClure Gallery of the Visual Arts Centre
from August 5 to 27, 2005.

Vernissage and performance: Thursday, August 4 at 6 pm.

The McClure Gallery is pleased to present a mixed-media exhibition in collaboration with the *Montreal Dialogue Group* and the *Full Circle Mandala Project* that features the collective works of Jews and Palestinians/Arabs who are actively engaged in finding the human in the "other".

Meeting in the Middle for Peace in the Middle East is an exhibition based on an intercultural exchange with an emphasis on peace, through mutually supportive Arab/Jewish relationships. The project is meant to bring awareness to spiritual, humanitarian and social issues through the participants' personal stories told in writing, painting, sculpture, photography and mixed media.

A group of Montreal Jews and Palestinians/Arabs, some artists, some not, collaborating for the first time, created a collective artwork in the form of mandalas (symbols of sacred and structural unity). The mandalas are constructed from a wide variety of materials, including paper made from Israeli and Palestinian newspapers, newspaper clippings, family photos, mementoes and bits of journals. The participants also cast their hands and faces to create sculptures that express the immediacy of their physical and emotional involvement in the stories they have recreated.

This project was initiated by Helga Schlee (artist, director of the *Full Circle Mandala Project* and Visual Arts Centre faculty member), and Nada Sefian and other members of the *Montreal Dialogue Group*.

With special thanks to Engrenage Noir, the CRB Foundation and the Canada Council for the Arts for their generous support.

Gallery Hours: Wednesday to Friday 12 – 6; Saturday 12 – 5.
galeriemcclure@centredesartsvisuels.ca

In recognition
of outstanding contributions as a

Peacemaker

Montreal Dialogue Group

has been awarded a

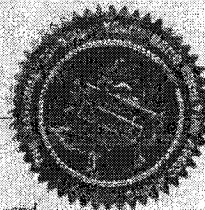
2005 YMCA Canada Peace Medal

by

YMCA of Greater Montreal

Jan Dussan
President

Sty-kome Jallancout
Chief Executive Officer



"The responsibility for peace begins with each person, in relationships with family and friends, and extends to community life and national activities. There are no simple recipes. It is we ourselves who must seek - act - pray for ways to be Peacemakers."

- YMCA Statement on Peace

Lifestyle

Jews and Arabs dialogue through art

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

Tali Goodfriend's 19-year-old brother was one of five Israelis killed in the suicide bombing of Hadera's central bus station in 1994.

Eleven years later she is coming to terms with his senseless death through a performance piece in which she plays the role of the young Palestinian terrorist.

Goodfriend, 46, who has been living in Montreal for 20 years, tries to put herself in the shoes of Amar Amrana. She imagines him and her brother Ari Pearlmutter, a paratrooper at the time, meeting on the bus under different circumstances, as just ordinary young men.

They talk about interests typical of their age group and plan to get together again at Banana Beach, a cafe in Tel Aviv.

Playing Ari is Lebanese-born Nada Sefian, whose Palestinian father left his native Ashkelon after Israeli independence. Her husband is also Palestinian, originally from Akko.

Goodfriend presented the short drama publicly for the first time this month at the Visual Arts Centre in Westmount at the opening of an art exhibition entitled Meeting in the Middle.

Co-organized by the Montreal Dialogue Group and the Full Circle Mandala Project, the exhibition consists of creations in a variety of media by the group's members who are of Jewish and Arab origin. One of the sponsors of the exhibition, which continues until Aug. 27, is Charles Bronfman's CRB Foundation.

Goodfriend's contribution is a triptych of hanging boxes that hold old family photos and passages of letters from Ari. His biggest wish was that the large family of nine siblings, raised in the remote Arava desert of southern Israel get back together. It took his tragic death to do that.

It also sent Goodfriend, a preschool and elementary teacher and mother of three, on a search for peace. Rather than be angry or vengeful, Goodfriend felt "something had to change" and she had to be a part of the process.

Ari has helped her over the years to deal with her feelings. The play has taken her five years to develop.

Goodfriend said her family, which made aliyah from the United States when she was 6, were quite strong in the belief there should be no returning of land to the Arabs.

On the other hand, she grew up with Bedouin children as classmates and friends.

The play, she emphasizes, is not an attempt to rationalize terrorism, but a means for her to work through grief to understanding. "It's my own personal journey," she said. "My message is that people can change, and that we must stop hating."

Last year, on the 10th anniversary of her brother's death, she spent three months in Israel doing research for a graduate degree in art education that she was completing at Concordia University. She was inspired by the work of Givat Haviva, an educational centre that promotes understanding between Jews and Arabs, including through art.

Upon her return to Montreal, Goodfriend felt ready to join the Montreal Dialogue Group, which was founded in 2003 to provide an opportunity for the two communities to listen to each other's stories and beliefs in a frank but respectful and supportive atmosphere.

The collective art project is intended as another means of connecting to the "other," and the exhibition to show the public that Jews and Arabs can engage with each other in a humane way. Few of the exhibitors are professional artists.

Organizers say it is coincidental that it is being held at the same time as Israel's evacuation of Gaza.

Among the common projects was making paper sculptures from Israeli and Arab newspapers, translating headlines for each other as they sat around the table together tearing them up. Many also cast their hands and faces in clay or plaster to express gestures relating to the story told in their artwork.

They were helped by Mandala Project director Helga Schleech, an art teacher who has for the past couple of years run workshops where participants create circular banners expressing their desire for peace in the Middle East.

Sefian, 56, is the Montreal Dialogue Group's co-president

with Ronit Yarosky, who served in the Israel Defence Forces during the first intifadah. The group now has 200 names on its mailing list and its dialogue sessions attract at least 40, about evenly composed of Jews and Arabs, Sefian said.

A "concert for peace" this year drew about 300 people, and its women's interfaith seder, with participation by Jews, Muslims and Christians, has sparked interest beyond the membership.

Sefian, who is Muslim but describes herself as secular, said playing the part of an Israeli killed by an Arab terrorist, was a profoundly emotional experience for her. "It was very hard, very touching. At the end I was crying and had to leave the room.

"It's unbelievable how courageous Tali is and also what tremendous generosity of spirit she has," Sefian said.

Sefian, a mother of four who settled permanently in Canada eight years ago, was trapped in south Lebanon during the 1982 Israeli invasion. One thing she refused to do for the performance was wear a military uniform.

"I have no hard feelings toward Israel or the Jewish people.



Tali Goodfriend, left, and Nada Sefian act out a scene. [Ehab Lotayef photo]

"I'm someone who believes in people and in co-existence, but until I was a Canadian citizen I was not engaged in any dialogue. Here I felt I could express myself freely without fear of being kicked out."

Sefian's artwork consists of photos, passports and documentation that tells of her and her family's peripatetic lives.

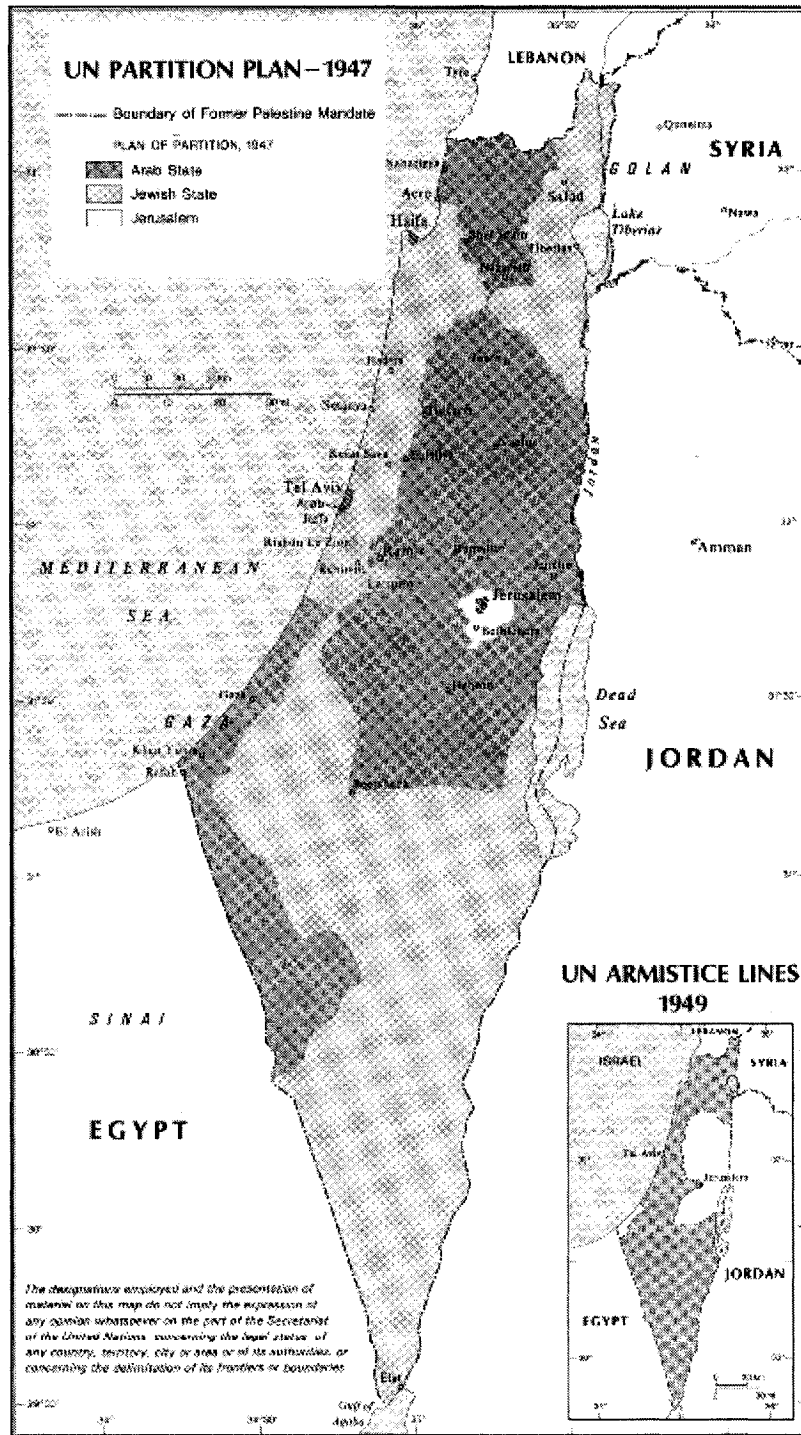
"I feel stateless, homeless. I can be happy living anywhere but I feel my real home is there [in Palestine]. My message is that that history should not be negated. It has to be faced with honesty, otherwise the conflict will never be over."

She hopes the exhibition will convey a more accurate image of Muslims. "Islam is being demonized as a violent religion and we are subject to a lot of barbaric stereotypes in the media and Canadian society, which really hurts.

"I am trying to say: look at me, I am not the enemy or a stranger. I have a face and a name."

Spokesperson Nancy Rosenfeld said the CRB gave the group a grant last year because the foundation funds a number of projects in Israel promoting co-existence between Jews and Palestinians and this art project fits in with that mandate.

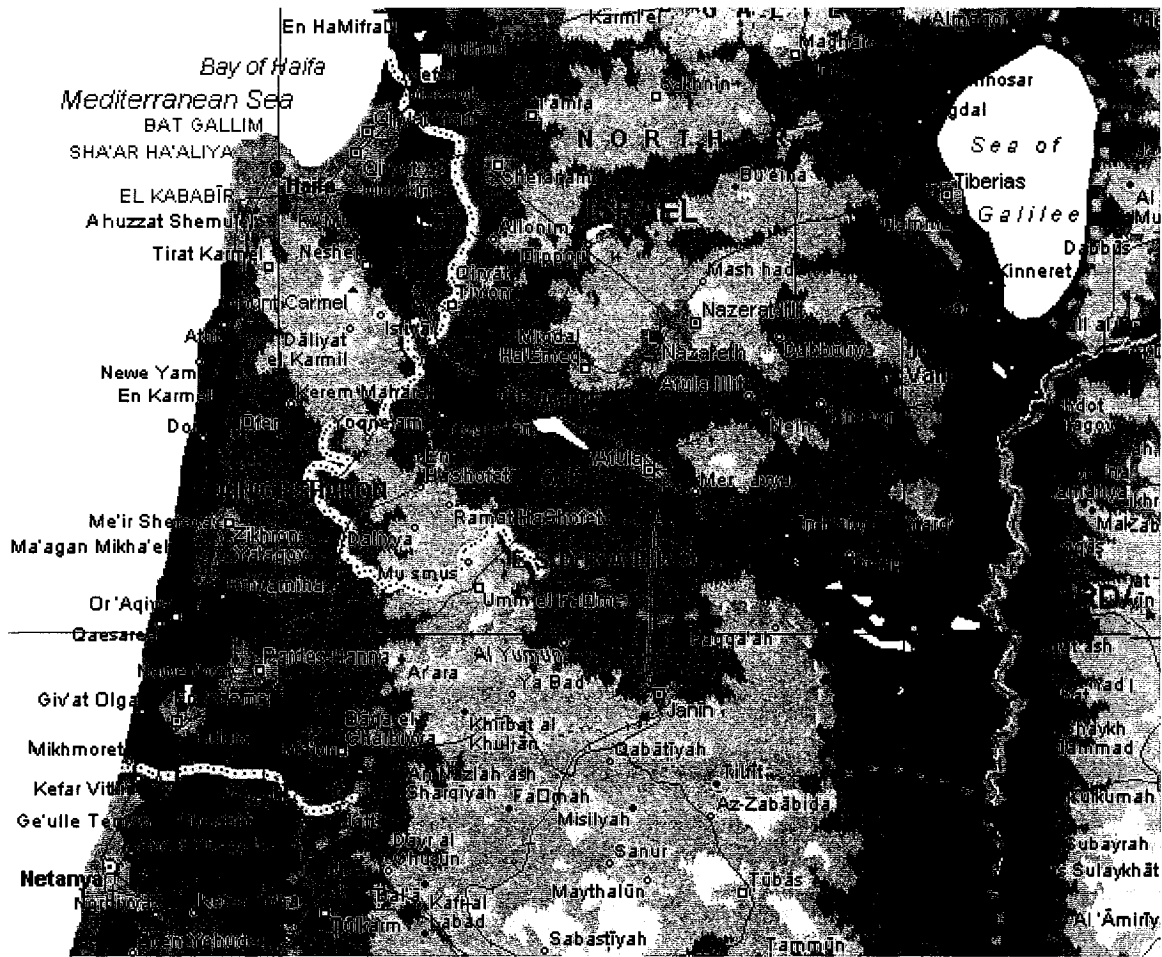
Appendix 6





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Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section



Map showing location of **Hadera** and **Ya'abad** (mentioned in the text). Also mentioned in the text are **Karkur** which is located just to the south of **Pardes Hanna** and **Kara** which is located just north of **Ar'ara** in the above map.