



# Jewish Art - NOW!

Over the centuries, Judaism has contributed to humanity by introducing the revolutionary idea of monotheism, a legacy of prophets, mystics, great scholars, and individuals with substantial achievements in every profession known to man - with one glaring, missing link (or so it seems) – great visual art. Of course, Jews have always been involved in the arts and although we have great Jewish poets, writers, story tellers, musicians and composers, thus far we only managed very few great visual artists (or at least those that want(ed) to identify themselves as Jewish). I don't mean Jews who made art (there were thousands of those) but Jews who made specifically Jewish art with the ambition to match the level and quality of the arts of other great cultures of the world.

I'm not a philosopher or a historian – I'm an artist and I would like to engage with Jewish artists worldwide in what I regard to be our current, most important, even urgent Jewish quest – to create great Jewish visual art.

In my view Jewish aesthetics begin with our quintessential text the Torah. In Genesis 1:31 we read “And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good” (italics are mine). Just like an artist, God ‘stands back’ and admires His creation. As Melissa Raphael<sup>1</sup> points out “in a refrain repeated six times, God makes a primordial aesthetic judgment that the world is beautiful in the perfect unity of its form and function... excellent for its purpose, the connotations here are less moral than aesthetic”. Aesthetic judgments were made right at the beginning of creation. “God creates the possibility of the visual image (not sound, smell or other impressions of the senses) in His first command of all: “Let there be light” Genesis 1:3.<sup>2</sup> As the Midrash suggests, God continues to keep His creation sustained/alive by speaking it into continuous existence. Creativity is constant. As long as the world will continue to exist, creativity and aesthetics are the underlying force-fields of creation. To emphasise this point and leading by example, God even ‘takes on the garb’ of the artist in a conventional sense - to begin with He creates by manipulating the ‘natural element’ eg: pillar of fire, column of smoke, the Flood, the rainbow, etc. Not satisfied with that elemental, ‘natural’ creativity, He seems to have a need for a covenantal relationship with man and therefore requiring a tangible (physical/like manmade object – so man could understand it) ‘contract’ by creating the first set of the two “Tablets of Testimony (the ten commandments), inscribed by the finger of God” (Exodus 31: 18) which are presented to Moses on Mt Sinai. Having created the world as a visual, aesthetically pleasing entity, God decides to live amongst it. However, in order to do so He must, very precisely instruct the people about the construction of His dwelling house. Having decided that the Jews were to build His abode on earth, according to the Torah, He becomes the first patron of Jewish art or to be precise, Godly art. Wanting to have a ‘physical place’ in order to “dwell amongst the Jewish people” God

decided to create the Mishkan (Tabernacle) and the associated objects as His special place.

God's instructions and specifications are very detailed as described in the Book of Exodus. God chose and directly inspired/instructed his designated Jewish artist – Betzalel (chosen because of his ability/insight with the manipulation of the Hebrew letters of creation) to make these never before seen objects. Betzalel was instructed/spiritually inspired in the creation of visual art, architecture, numerous crafts and in the teaching of these (Exodus 35:30-34). As a good patron, God also appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach from the tribe of Dan as his assistant (Exodus 35:35). Thus Jewish visual Art came into being. To follow this line of thought I would suggest that God needed these Jewish visual art objects in order for us to ‘be able to connect’ with His presence through the mitzvot of using these objects. As a result, we as Jews were/are compelled to make art – by Godly decree! Perhaps this is a recipe for all art - to be inspired by or contain a spiritual dimension? None the less, it follows that Jewish art at the beginning at least was certainly also a Godly art!

Mel Alexenberg makes an interesting observation: “The literal translation of Betzalel's (Bezel El) full name is; ‘in the Divine Shadow son of Fiery Light son of Freedom’. In the Shadow of God is a reference to Betzalel's ability to interpret God's will as well as Moses' instructions as directed by God. It honours the artist's passion and freedom of expression. That his name is not ‘in the Divine Light’ acknowledges the shadow side of the creative process, the Freudian subconscious, the dark inclinations that need to be transformed into life-enhancing energies. The artist possesses the creative power to turn darkness into light... Ohaliab's full name translates as ‘My Tent of Reliance on Father, Son and Brother’, integrating the contemporary with its past and future... Betzalel represents the psychological power of the artist and Ohaliab the sociological impact on community... The prototypic Jewish art is a collaborative enterprise... it results in a creation of a modular, mobile structure (the tabernacle) in which the divine shekinah can dwell and engage human beings in dialogue”.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Melissa Raphael, Judaism and the visual image, A Jewish Theology of Art. Continuum Publishing Group, England 2009, page 45.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 46.

<sup>3</sup> Mel Alexenberg, Jewish Consciousness in Art of the Digital Age, 2003, submitted for publication to the Institute of Judaism and Civilization, Melbourne.



In a way Betzalel and Ohaliab are the archetypes that epitomise all artists - one does not choose to become an artist as a career by logical decisions but in a compulsive/inspired sense one is 'chosen' for it.

Ever since I can remember, I always wanted to be an artist. I always drew. It was the only thing that I could do (reasonably well) and wanted to do more of. As a child I suffered from migraines and often would have to stay in bed for days. My parents had to go to work so I would happily be left home, on my own and as long as I had my drawing paper and pencils I was happy. I connected to the world from the chariot of my bed through my drawing pad.

Unlike the history of any other type of art that naturally goes through a long period of slow gestation and development before reaching its creative zenith and then is followed by its inevitable decline, Jewish visual art starts out at the absolute pinnacle of creative possibility. The objects Betzalel created were unique, inventively creative and without precedents. Their Jewishness consisted in the combination of their specific aesthetic beauty and particular functionality for spiritual purposes. They epitomise the elevation of utilitarian objects to a mystical purpose. Another clear example of that is the specific injunction about the priestly garments and vestments that the Kohen Gadol should (make and) wear while attending to his priestly duties, Exodus 28:4. These were to be made for 'dignity and beauty'. Just like with the creation of the architecture and 'industrial objects' required for the Mishkan, the fashion design of the priestly garments are articulated without precedence, they are fully formed, designed and created. Where Greek culture venerated the holiness of beauty, we Jews believe in *hadrat kodesh*, the beauty of holiness.

It therefore appears to me that because Jewish art was born - fully developed, future generations of Jewish artists had at least two, very clear opportunities/possibilities open to them. They could:

- 1) Follow the lead of Betzalel and create Jewish (mystically elevated) objects/images both as an extension of the ceremonial or ritualistic type artefacts for direct assistance with worship in the Temple or synagogue as the circumstantial needs changed, as well as to continue to be inspired by the workings of Godly actions/plans as they became revealed over the centuries From Abraham to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai to Arizal to Nachmonides to Chassidus, and all the other prophets and commentators in between. Jewish art resulting from this particular impulse is usually referred to as *Judaica*.

### ***and/or***

- 2) To follow the Talmudic example and interpret the workings of God's creations, nature, the universe and man's place within it, through the process' of Jewish experience, intelligence, creativity and understanding. A specifically Jewish 'world view' if you will. Notwithstanding (the past) obstacles posed by the 2nd Commandment, this approach can well accommodate even the stringent Halachic limitations.

Both of these categories embrace the broad parameters and potential for a Jewish visual Art; the first category is in the form of instruction/inspiration initiated by G-d to man, the second is a potential dialogue, interpretation, argument and or provocation initiated by man. Due to historical, political and cultural reasons these potentials are still in their embryonic state as they never had a chance to evolve to their full possibilities, and in my view provide a challenge for Jewish artists still, especially today. Having such lofty beginnings, why hasn't a Jewish art evolved? Why is it that every Jewish artist goes through a personal journey almost starting from scratch when it comes to one's own Jewishness in art? Why is the subject so difficult, so divisive and so undervalued both amongst artists and cultural historians?

From the Babylonian exile onwards, as a generally accepted historical norm, the creative abilities of Jews seem to have been directed towards Torah scholarship, theological dissertation, poetry, crafts/trades as well as legal pursuits as a way of retaining their/our unique cultural identity and legitimising participation in the various diasporic cultures that Jews found themselves within. The Jewish diasporic experience necessitated a portable culture. Books are transported or even memorised much more readily than paintings or sculpture.

The diasporic experience for Jews seems to have had one consistent pattern; relative periods of peace, followed by regular periods of ever newly inventive forms of discrimination, fear, ostracism, anti-Semitism and eventual expulsion. The ultimate result of this pattern was the incomprehensibility of the Holocaust. Equally incomprehensible was the silence by the rest of the world to the plight of the Jews. Silence, emptiness, an abyss, nothingness and death are the most apt and by now the most cliché metaphors for the Holocaust and which in some sectors represent the whole diasporic experience itself. Perhaps Adorno was right and poetry is impossible to be created after the Holocaust. Yet it is poetry that best encapsulates the Jewish spirit, like the poem 'White Stars' written in the Vilna Ghetto, during the most unimaginable dark times by Abraham Sutzkever, one of the greatest Yiddish poets;

"...But in cellars and holes  
Cries the murderous quiet  
I fly higher, over rooftops  
And I search: Where are You? Where?  
Under Your white stars  
Stretch to me Your white hand  
My words are tears  
Wanting to rest in Your hand..."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Sutzkever 1941 Yiddish poem 'Unter Dayne Vayse Shtern' written in the Vilna Ghetto.



A yearning, a search for God's purpose during the most desolate abandonment. What happened to that original 'good' in creation that God exclaimed so aesthetically? Debbie Masel writes; "On Tisha b'Av we sit by the rivers of blood and tears that flow from Babylon to Babi Yar. How can we sing the Lord's song in an ocean of suffering? If I forget you. O Jerusalem, may my right hand wither, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth... Our longing is our one true song, writes the Rabbi of Piacezna in 1942, in the Warsaw Ghetto. It is the song of songs, from a world beyond words; the song of faith after Auschwitz."<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps this abyss, silence and a sense of withdrawal is one of the most poignant conceptual parameters of Jewish visual art? After all God had to 'withdraw' in order to provide the space to create our world. In my view, as Jewish artists we have an obligation to create, especially after (and because of) the Holocaust!

I was born towards the end of WW2, in Russia where my (Polish born) parents fled to in order to escape the war. We returned to Poland, to Lodz in 1946 and I attended a Jewish kindergarten and eventually a Jewish (Yiddish) school, the Peretz School, named after the famous Jewish author and playwright Isaac Leib Peretz. This was a secular, Yiddish school that epitomised Peretz's cultural position. He saw his role as a Jewish writer was to express "Jewish ideals...grounded in Jewish tradition and Jewish history"<sup>6</sup>. The safety cocoon of this school and home where Yiddish was my first language provided me with a cherished connection to Jewish secular culture and Judaism in its broadest inclusive sense. My strongest and most vivid memories however, of these early childhood years are not so pleasant. I remember being chased, having stones thrown at me, being spat at and at times accosted physically on the way home from school and in our apartment's courtyard by Polish kids of my own age or slightly older, screaming at me and other Jewish kids "you filthy Jew(s) go back to Palestine". I only knew Poland. Their taunts about Palestine confused me. At that age I didn't even know where Palestine was! It's ironic that from 2010 some voices were being heard internationally for the Jews in Israel to "go back to where they came from - Europe" The Europe that disgorged its Jews so angrily!

We left Poland in 1958 for France and eventually Australia. I trace my artistic beginnings to our year in Paris where I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of two day school students to attend art classes run by a professional artist in the loft of our school, 3 times a week. Although I was the youngest there, I was provided with paints, paper, canvasses and drawing materials and was treated equally to everyone else in the class. That year I also discovered the great museums of Paris and artists like Rembrandt, Rubens, Velasquez, Van Gogh, Monet, Picasso, Matisse amongst many others who imprinted themselves on my aspiration. I absorbed this visual feast with a passion. I wanted to be part of this camaraderie. After one year we left Paris (I left very reluctantly) for Australia where we settled permanently.

In the late 1950's Australia was somewhat of a cultural backwater of Colonial Brittan and although Modernism was gradually fighting its way into the broader culture, regional, nostalgically rural aesthetics dominated. It wasn't until the late 1960's that the new attitude

which was flooding the world finally reached Australia. American, bold, large scale, primary coloured, cutting edge aesthetic was a breath of freedom from the narrow, usually brownish, nationalistically orientated Australian regionalist or British aesthetic. I embraced this new (to me) art with enthusiasm. The political weapon which this art became misused as an American cold war tool only became apparent (to me) much later.

At that time, Judaism was a private, cultural matter for me, experienced at home. My art was my public stage where Formalist and art Conceptual ideas so prevalent in the art world at that time dominated. Yet I remember desperately looking for a possible unification of my (public) paintings with an inner voice (my Jewish self).

I had no idea how to go about making my art Jewish. There were so few precedents and certainly none in Australia. The answers to my dilemma presented themselves in an unexpected way. My artistically Jewish cultural 'awakening' which felt more like thunderbolt revelations occurred during a trip to the USA in 1977. The first one occurred at the Museum of Jewish Art in New York where the exhibition Fabric of Jewish Life opened my eyes to the visual richness of Jewish ritual cloths (of our/my past), and the second occurred in Huston at the Rothko Chapel where the potential of a Jewish spiritual/mystical content presented itself as a possibility, for the first time in my life.

I came to appreciate the detailed loving care that most Jewish ritual cloths are made with. Their ordinariness, everydayness, their function yet their beauty made me understand the sense of depth that Jewish art could have. These common (cloths) objects found in most synagogues are elevated through art to a spiritual plane. They provided me with the connection, a lineage to Betzalel's creations – the first Jewish art objects. This was a powerful realisation of a central Jewish tenet that the Godly exists within the ordinary and that Judaism seeks to elevate the ordinary up to the Godly level. This was one key to my understanding of the essence of a Jewish aesthetic and a possible way to blend the two artistic possibilities of Jewish art I discussed previously. In the Rothko Chapel I experienced a sense greater than myself. In this 'nothingness' of space amongst the grey paintings of Rothko I discovered a possible space created (for me/anyone) by this 'grave emptiness' that cried out to be filled! This was the second key that unlocked the potential within me to combine my present reality as an artist with my culturally deep reality as a Jew. These momentous experiences led me on a journey where art and Jewishness exist as mutually attracting, seductive forces, longing for unification, intertwined inside of everything I am and do as an artist.

<sup>5</sup> Debbie Masel, Shabbat Chazon, 17 July 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Sol Liptzin, Stories from Peretz 1947.



The establishment of the State of Israel and the reunification of Jews with their ancestral land after 2000 years of diasporic 'wonderings' finally provided the perfect, natural opportunity for a Jewish visual art to develop and flourish. Interestingly, already in 1907 Rabbi Kook sent a message dedicating the Betzalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, while lamenting over the suffering of Jews scattered in exile, he continued: "one of the clear signs of revival is the honourable pursuit that is to emerge from your honoured association, 'The Revival of Art and Hebraic Beauty in the Land of Israel.'"<sup>7</sup> And yet, if anything - an Israeli art emerged, not a Jewish one. Israeli artists (until recently, perhaps) regarded themselves as Israelis first, Jewish (if at all) a very distant second. And although the UN Charter that created the State of Israel makes numerous references to "a Jewish State" this seems to be a work in progress and only gradually becoming part of the Israeli psyche and aesthetic. With current, growing world attitudes towards the delegitimization of the existence of the State of Israel and the trouble that some countries as well as the Palestinian Authority have in recognising Israel as a Jewish State, the Israeli Government and the Israeli public has begun to refocus/re-embrace its Jewishness as a central core to its/our national and cultural identity.

In support of this attitude, I believe that it's high time for Jewish artists worldwide to re-focus their/our Jewishness as a motivating and inspirational factor in our art. Partly in solidarity with Israel as a political response to the delegitimizes, partly for cultural reasons in order to (re)establish the centrality of Judaism in our lives and partly because it is high time to develop the full potential of a Jewish visual art to blossom as one of the great arts of the world. As a people as well as a culture we deserve a great Jewish visual art!

Since the possibility of a Jewish aesthetic affected me so powerfully in 1977, I have over the years become more convinced about and committed to the creation of a Jewish art. My intention from that distant beginning was to create a great Jewish art. I want to create Jewish paintings of the quality of the great masters of art, not unlike what Cezanne used to refer to as 'paintings for the museums'. In my case I wanted to create a legacy for future Jewish artists so that they would have some possible example to follow. So that in the future Jewish artists wouldn't have to 'rediscover the wheel' of Jewish art but have a precursor to follow, to react against, to contribute to etc.

I started with tentative attempts at visualising Jewishly. I had very few precedents to respond to so like most Jewish artists (until now perhaps) I started 'from scratch'. I had to invent for myself a Jewish symbology and content. I immersed myself in a wide range of Jewish texts in order to understand my Jewish heritage – after all we do have a long and rich written tradition. I undertook ideas that explored my personal Jewish history and identity in a series of paintings and works on paper. Diaristic images reflecting my past experiences filled my paintings through the late 1970's and early 80's. I expanded these through the 1980's and 90's into themes that dealt with important aspects of the cultural Jewish history of Australia like migration and the Jewish connection to other minorities in Australia, especially the Aborigines.

At the same time as my personal Jewish, diasporic, historical content was developing, increasingly more spiritual or religiously based ideas/works started to interest me. I became aware that Jews made art wherever they found themselves – Haggadot are a good example. There was no illustrated, Australian Haggadah – so I decided to create one. I self published it in 1993. I saw a creative void so I filled it with ideas that celebrated the biblical Exodus as well as my reality of Australia. It is essential for me that I acknowledge the land and country I live in. The Australian multicultural context is part of my psyche and I believe that this allows my Jewish content to thrive. I am a Jew and an Australian. The Australian context (landscape, light, flora and fauna) distinguished my Haggadah from all the others. In this work I located our ancestral flight from slavery in Egypt within the Australian locale as a metaphor for my own family's flight from Europe. There was another connection to the idea of 'wondering in the wilderness' that was obliquely hinted at in my Australian Haggadah – a proposal in the 1930's to establish a Jewish settlement in the Kimberley, Western Australia. I explored that particular theme over a 10 year period which culminated in a major exhibition titled Wounded – Land, Memory, Destiny in 2004 in Melbourne. One of the sub-themes I explored in this body of work was the provocative potential effect of locating a Jewish settlement in Aboriginal lands and the double dislocation this would have caused to two peoples Aborigines and Jews. I was fascinated by the historical parallels of Aboriginal and Jewish dispossession and expulsions. These were balanced by a number of works dealing with an apology presented to the Jewish people in Israel and in Australia in 2001 by a Christian group of nuns The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary (formed in 1952 in Darmstadt-Eberstadt, Germany) on behalf of all Christian denominations for the long history of anti-Semitism perpetrated by the Church. This was contrasted by the long overdue apology from the Australian Federal Government to the Aboriginal peoples (that the Government was unable to provide until 2008) for the long history of dispossession of their ancestral lands, family break ups through 'the stolen generation' and mass murder. Coincidentally, I was a witness also in 2001 on the tribal lands of the Warmun Community in the Kimberley where the Governor General of Australia Sir William Dean presented his personal apology to that community for all of the terrible atrocities that were perpetrated against them by white people.

The final part of this exhibition dealt with my personal experiences caused by our family's translocation from Europe to Australia, directly as a result of anti-Semitism.

<sup>7</sup> As referenced in Kalman P. Bland's *The Artless Jew* page 33.



As Jewish content was increasingly taking over my work, I felt that I had to connect emotionally and physically with the ancestral land of Israel which led me to embark on two major series of paintings; The Negev (1997) and Galil/Golan (2006). Only after spending prolonged periods of time in Israel – wandering, painting and imagining did I begin to have some inkling into the mystical levels of Judaism which became my predominant creative interest over the past 15 years. In collaboration with a Melbourne rabbi we engrossed ourselves in the study of the 2nd book of Tanya which resulted in 10 limited edition silk screen prints. The process of study as a prelude to creating visually has become my regular routine. I find most Jewish texts, especially the Torah very visual yet surprisingly very few Jewish artists have engaged with them. Numerous Christian artists have created masterpieces based on images derived from Jewish texts (or rather their interpretations of them) yet there are no Jewish equivalent masterpieces. This fact disturbed me for years! After studying numerous Christian Biblical paintings, some of which are my favourite paintings ever painted and realising how far these artists diverged from the original Jewish texts, often resulting in misinterpreted iconography, I decided to 'balance the ledger' (so to speak) and create my own, Jewish Biblical interpretations. This culminated in a series of paintings that made up an exhibition and book launch of Painting the Torah at the Jewish Museum in Melbourne in 2008. I painted all of the 54 parshot (weekly portions) of the Torah intentionally and specifically from a Jewish perspective.

With every major Jewish project I undertake like the Australian Haggadah, Images of Tanya, or Painting the Torah (to name a few) I want to contribute to and help create the Jewish visual art tradition. Sometimes I'm pioneering new works, visualising major Jewish texts for the first time ever, at others, for the first time in the Australian context. My aim is to contribute and thereby enrich this however humble (at this point) Jewish visual art tradition and hopefully to help set a somewhat easier path for future Jewish artists to work within it.

Another motivating factor (for me) and perhaps even more central to my artistic practice is that I want to create a Jewish art with specifically Jewish content, symbolism, metaphors etc so that whoever views my paintings will get a deeper and more meaningful understanding of Judaism. In the Midrashic tradition that is so important to Judaism, I would like to think that my art works are a kind of my personal Midrash, my personal take on and exploration of my Jewish culture, tradition and aesthetic. I do and think this without fear of career sabotage or cultural cringe that so many Jewish artists in every country of the globe succumb to.

To me Jewish art is not merely a concept, it's not just an accidental result of my being born Jewish, it's a conscious effort on my part to infuse everything I paint with layers of meaning that are inherently Jewish. For me Jewish art is not just a distant dream, it's a reality right here, right now, although its great potential is only beginning to be realised by artists, historians and cultural commentators.

It now requires a united effort by Jewish artists across the globe to take up this challenge and need and I'm convinced that our combined abilities will result in a great Jewish visual art. The world will come to know that Jew's are not only the 'people of the book' but people of aesthetics and art as well, as we were destined to be, from our very beginnings.

Now is the long overdue time to act!

- It is time for Jewish artists to embrace and celebrate their heritage, history, religion and culture and create great Jewish visual art.
- It is time to create a Jewish art free of victimhood.
- It is time for a Jewish aesthetic to take its place as equal amongst cultures.
- It is time for Jewish artists to create a Jewish art as our cultural weapon against hate, violence, bigotry, anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism but especially against the silence of the world once again to the plight of Jews.
- It's time for Jewish artists to create a Jewish art that will elevate man's potential to the inspirational rather than point at man's capacity for the limited or destructive.
- It is time to create a Jewish art that is free from self hatred, inferiority complexes or self denigration.
- It is time to create a Jewish art that is Jewishly diverse and inclusive, from a secular perspective to the orthodox one and every nuance in between.
- It is time to create a Jewish art that is never TOO JEWISH!



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## A Manifesto for a contemporary Jewish visual Art

1. At its essence, Jewish Art is connected to and inspired by the Torah and all other Jewish texts / interpretations / understandings from a specifically Jewish / Hebraic form of discourse.
2. Jewish Art is an art of revelation. Whether, personal, social, cultural or spiritual; it reveals insights into whatever or however one defines reality in all its levels and dimensions.
3. Jewish Art is grounded within 'this world' as we continue to know / understand it. The ultimate purpose of it however is to influence and hopefully help to complete and transform (elevate) it and our experiences of it.
4. Jewish Art is an art of unity. No matter how fractured its individual parts may be or how many separate facets it may employ or contain, its ultimate purpose is to reveal the underlying unity (purpose) of existence. It deals primarily with fusion rather than deconstruction. It is about integration, a coming together, a coupling, an orgy of couplings! A cosmology of couplings!
5. Jewish Art is multi-faceted. It deals with ideas that address issues beyond the purely visible or surface level of appearances. What you see is definitely not (just) what you get. The visible is purely the first (lowest) layer / level of its meaning. Although this surface level is perfectly sufficient in its own right, Jewish Art is capable of including references to other levels of existence together with other layers of meaning. Depending on one's level of knowledge and understanding of this multi layered content, one is able to decode and unravel the (possible) levels in order to appreciate the full range of meanings contained within it.
6. Jewish Art is an art that deals with all levels of human experience; physical, emotional, imaginary, spiritual and G-dly. This art is not limited by logic as we know it. It may employ it or aspects of it but not be limited by it. It is free to explore all kinds of possibilities outside logic or pragmatic understanding.
7. Jewish Art does not depend upon any specific technology. It embraces all technological developments as they evolve in the service of discovery, revelation or understanding.
8. Jewish Art is not restricted by any style or modes of representation. It readily borrows from the past, embraces current tastes, fashions and styles and is also open to stylistic variations and future stylistic inventions or hybrids. The ultimate goal however is to evolve its own, unique and original modes of representation.
9. Jewish Art springs from the artist's personal identification as a Jew and ones relationship with/to Judaism. This may encompass a range of deeply committed, observant modes and practices of Judaism as well as a range of possibly 'strained', questioning relations through tension and argument. It may be inspired by deep connections with or to the land of Israel, or by Diasporic experiences.
10. As with all art, global implications are inevitable but the main purpose of Jewish Art is to celebrate Judaism in all its complexity, in a pro-active and from an intentionally Jewish perspective.

V.Majzner October 2010 – revised March 2012 ©