

Abstracts

The “Defective Dad”: Representations of “New” Israeli Fatherhood in Visual Culture

Nitsan Israeli

This essay traces the image of the *aba pagum* [“defective dad”] as canonized by the viral Facebook group of the same name. The author suggests that Israeli men’s identification with this representation of fatherhood expresses an ambivalence regarding their perception and experience of the paternal role due to the conflicting gender expectations ingrained in Israeli culture and society. The article examines how this complex identity is formulated visually in Israeli popular culture and the visual arts through diverse media: children’s books illustrations, self-images shared by members of the Aba Pagum group on social media, and the self- and family portraits created by artists Boaz Tal, Guy Ben-Ner, and Asaf Hanuka. Analysis of these self-representations reveals the power of visual culture as an arena of negotiation and formation of changing identities of fatherhood and masculinity and their discourse.

Dancing Pandemic: Between Helplessness and Discipline

Tzaphira Allison Stern

This article focuses on the term ‘movement’ regarding the unique forms and restrictions manifested in the public sphere during the Covid_19 pandemic in Israel, 2020. During this period, Israeli residents experienced extreme changes in day-to-day life due to the spread of the Covid_19 virus and the government’s restrictions on movement that followed. The changes manifested in the public sphere as a void and slowness, influencing movement patterns on a personal, social, and political level. Out of this crisis grew new daily routines, political demonstrations, and artistic reactions, especially in dance, which embodies movement in space and is exemplary of the freedom of movement. Against this backdrop, I discuss two choreographies performed in the public sphere during the pandemic in 2020: AMPHI by Omer Krieger, and About Blindness: An Intervention in Public Space by Dana Hirsch Laiser. In addition to the uniqueness of dance in the public sphere during the pandemic, bio-political aspects illuminate the Covid_19 experience from a larger human and social

perspective. These creations' choreographic imprint embodies and exemplifies the fundamental tension of the times: the power of the state over the restricted body vs. the helplessness of the human condition striving for freedom of movement.

Parchment Production by Jews in Ashkenaz in the Middle Ages

Joseph Isaac Lifshitz

Until recently, the common assumption was that the Medieval Jews in Germany were mainly merchants and money lenders, and that guilds of various crafts prohibited Jews from joining their guild. Yet recent scholarship reveals more and more the existence of Jewish craftsmen. This paper presents the craft of parchment production, which at the beginning of the Middle Ages was in the hands of non-Jews only, and toward the late Middle Ages became a craft in which that Jews engaged, even as members of the guild.

This shift stemmed from two processes. The first was halachic: More and more halachic scholars approved medieval technologies of parchment production with lime, regardless of Talmudic instruction to use gall and flour. In addition to the halachic change, there was a change in the power of the guilds and their ability to prohibit Jews from joining, due to economic changes.

'The King of Reporters' versus 'The Bad Girl' of the Russian avant-garde: The ideology of Vladimir Gilyarovsky's resistance to Natalia Goncharova' 1910 solo exhibition

Ariela Shimshon

Probably the most important solo exhibition of Russian avant-garde artist Natalia Goncharova, was mounted in March 1910 in Moscow. The review of the exhibition, written by culture critic Vladimir Gilyarovsky, was the most influential on Goncharova's emerging career. It was published in the daily newspaper *The Voice of Moscow*, and sharply criticized the artist and her works. In my paper, I show that Gilyarovsky's criticism aimed to destroy Goncharova's reputation and disrupt her artistic project. However, it led to the opposite result: Thanks to his review, the anonymous Goncharova became famous and was dubbed 'Queen of the Russian avant-garde'. I examine Gilyarovsky's motives for writing his review, focusing on the struggle between the supporters of academic painting and the avant-garde at the turn of the 20th century. I argue that Gilyarovsky was a key figure in promoting Goncharova's success. I seek to show that Gilyarovsky's objection to Goncharova's works

was due to her use of Russian national symbols in the development of a new artistic genre. Gilyarovsky was the first to recognize Goncharova's intentions, and attempted – and failed – to harm her reputation. The disagreement between the two was based on the question of who has the authority to determine the proper use of religious symbols. The seemingly devastating review thus defined Goncharova as a provocative artist and an emblem of the Russian avant-garde.

"With a Mighty Hand and an Outstretched Arm": On the Hand(s) of God in the Exodus Panel in the Dura-Europos Synagogue

Noa Yuval Hacham

The frescoes of the ancient synagogue at Dura-Europos (present-day Syria) pioneered the use of a visual image to embody the Divine presence and revelation in biblical contexts. The hand of God that represents the Divine presence appears in five of the synagogue's murals, one of which – the Exodus panel – is the focus of this article. The discussion includes, on the one hand, broad scrutiny of the visual image of the hand of God that investigates its conceptual roots in Jewish thought and its iconographic sources; and on the other hand, focused consideration of the Exodus panel from iconographic and literary perspectives. The article also examines the image of the hand of God in visual depictions of the Exodus in Late Antiquity Jewish and Christian art.

Michal Rovner Walks into the Nursery: Reading Hug by David Grossman and Michal Rovner as an Artwork

Etti Gordon Ginzburg and Goni Ben-Israel Kasuto

In 2011, Israeli author David Grossman and Israeli-born artist Michal Rovner published *Hug*, their first joint children's book, with Grossman's text and Rovner's artwork (the term used in the book for what would otherwise be described as illustrations in the context of children's literature); Rovner was also responsible for the book's design. While most critics of *Hug* comment on Rovner's artwork, they are nonetheless informed by the outlook and context of children's literature, the discipline from which they come.

The present essay, however, offers a novel reading of *Hug* not only as a children's book, but also as an artwork, a unified composite where text and image are imbricated and intertwined to create what W.J.T. Mitchell calls *imagetext*. The article considers the unique nature of Rovner's art and reads *Hug* within the broader context of her artistic worldview and works, thereby

challenging the book's traditional interpretation as well as its classification as children's literature.

Symmetry and its Disruption in Bronislava Nijinska's Les Noces (1923)

Dana Bar

This article presents a new perspective for analysing the dance piece *Les Noces (1923)*, created by Bronislava Nižinskaja. This new perspective is based on analysis of the dance in regard to form and content, in terms of symmetry and its disruption.

The analysis of *Les Noces* in terms of symmetry and its disruption demonstrates how the relationship between symmetry and asymmetry therein plays two central roles: The first is a central formal and compositional means, which creates tension, connects between the events, and serves as the inner logic for how the dance evolves. The second is related to form, which carries symbolic content. Both roles are intertwined, just as symmetry and its disruption are intertwined in the dance. The existence of each of them relies on the existence of the other. Both roles are combined into one whole, which is expressed in the dance's unity of form and meaning.

First encounter: Revealing and exploring Ms. Heb. 8°7087 from the National Library in Jerusalem

Violeta Riechman

The Bible's manuscript Heb. 8°7087 Torah with Rashi's commentary, in the National Library in Jerusalem, has yet to be extensively studied by scholars. The manuscript is comprised of two components: the written text, which includes the scripture and Rashi's commentary; and the visual text, which includes illustrations and illuminations that are incorporated into the written text. This manuscript's uniqueness lies in the combination of the written and visual texts, thus it should be examined and analyzed with that in mind. Moreover, it should be determined whether the visual texts serve as illustrations only, or if they offer new interpretations to the written text.

Cultural Production during the Pandemic: A Critical Ethnography of Simulative Leisure

Yaniv Belhassen

This paper examines cultural initiatives developed during the pandemic lockdowns and restrictions in the Old City of Beer Sheva between March and October 2020. Based on critical ethnographic fieldwork, the study focuses on three initiatives spontaneously mounted during the lockdowns: reading theater, staged photography, and pop-up culinary events. Semiotic analysis is used to analyze the ethnographic data, with the goal of identifying and analyzing implicit and explicit characteristics and meanings. The denotative analysis shows that the initiatives were developed as small-scale, pastiche-like entertaining simulations of cultural practices that had disappeared from the public sphere: the museum experience, the theater experience, and the dining out experience. The connotative analysis illuminates how critical messages were inscribed and performed by the cultural agents. The study concludes with theoretical and applied insights on the lockdowns' effects on cultural production and consumption in late capitalism.