Slang Design: Experimental Israeli Design at the Turn of the New Millennium

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The age of cooperative design styles and "isms" did not make the leap into the new millennium and in the first decade and a half of the 21st century there are apparently more competing styles identified with individual designers than homogeneous groups sharing an ideology, which was important for the theoreticians of art in the 20th century. What was once identified as postmodernism has acceded to a multiplicity of diverse approaches and is no longer relevant. On the other hand, it is even more difficult to predict whether approaches to design will be strongly independent of one another, or whether an approach uniting groups of designers will be possible once more. The world of fashion shows us that individualistic dress that is isolated from the social and cultural-communal contexts of a particular generation is a theoretical ideal and is not in touch with the seething sociological reality of the digital world. The attempt to create a collective identity for the phenomenon of Israeli design at the start of the 21st century means actually looking at design that is taking place in Israel without fear of oversimplification, from an understanding that the influences on Israeli designers are diverse, and that a designer reflects the landscape of the websites he or she visits as much the concrete cultural landscape in which he or she lives.

I cannot objectively survey the phenomenon of Israeli Slang Design at the start of the 21st century, since during those same years I was an integral part of the process through my work as a designer, teacher, and curator of design. I started out as a design student in 1986 and after ten years was appointed head of the industrial design department of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. I initiated and organized exhibitions, conferences and workshops, edited journals and catalogues, and wrote articles, while taking a major (and somewhat controversial) part in the scene. For this reason, the rest of this essay should be read both as an objective story anchored in historical fact and as a subjective interpretation based on the perspective of an insider.

Since the year 2000, Israeli design has gone from being a marginal phenomenon in Israeli culture to an active player with a considerable international presence. Israeli designers, design groups and firms have succeeded in breaking into the global arena and becoming important contributors. This breakthrough would not have happened were it not for the slow, yet significant, incubation period that began in the design schools, followed by the equally slow, yet steady, march of Israeli designers into art museums and galleries. In order to assess the state of Israeli design at the turn of the millennium we must first carefully review the gestation period, which I believe, began in the mid-1980s.

Gestation (1985–2000)

The roots of Slang Design in Israel can be traced to the period before the founding of the state, and the creation of a local culture and its related social-cultural inventions, which included the kibbutz, the moshav, the underground resistance movements and new urbanization. The Bezalel Academy was central to this process in two distinct phases: the arts and crafts stage which brought Boris Schatz to Palestine in 1906 and the Bauhaus movement influence which, in 1935, brought Mordecai Ardon and his colleagues who were fleeing an imploding Germany. In the creation of this new local culture one sensed the influence of the eclectic borrowings from the diverse culture of the Levant, such as the local Arab and Ottoman cultures, British culture and the many minor cultures brought by Jewish immigrants. These all influenced the revival of the Hebrew language and also the language of design expressed both in dress and household furnishings. The Palmach[1] for example contributed to the creation of a manner of speech and dress that clearly conveyed its members' rejection of bourgeois lifestyle.

Israel's founding as a socialist and modernist state meant that design languages were adopted from the wider world, with German and American influences becoming the most prominent from the 1950s to the 1980s. The rules of "good design" fused into a universal language, while designers and teachers of design inculcated their own "genetic" foundations. There was, at the time, a general desire to be like all other nations, and thoughts about Israeli identity and uniqueness were marginal.

Breaking with the conventions of "good design" began in the 1980s when Israeli design underwent a dramatic change and embraced radical approaches. These approaches, crystallized in the work of commercial designers in Italy and England, were adopted by members of both academia and the establishment.

I consider the year 1985 as the beginning of the "gestation" period of unconventional design in Israel. It was in that year that Hans and Ilana (Herschenberg) Pallada founded the Cactus Design Gallery on Shenkin Street in Tel Aviv, which was a spinoff of Plastic Plus further down the road.[2] The couple used new plastic materials from the local Israeli industrial market –polypropylene sheets (the Mapal factory) and "polygal" (Kibbutz Industries) – in the production of a collection of inexpensive items in a pop-art design style.

Cactus invited a number of young designers, all graduates of Bezalel, to exhibit and sell inexpensive items intended for newcomers moving to this area of Tel Aviv. The store and gallery were the first in Israel to exhibit the work of Israeli designers outside of academia. The Cactus group included Gad Charny, Tali Lev Charny, Dalia Levin, Vera Wallerstein, Shai Barkan and Efrat Zaksenberg. The mixing of the designers' fields of expertise – industrial, textile, fashion, and jewelry – was unique and pioneering, as was the entire phenomenon in the Israeli landscape of combining a commercial and cultural initiative. The unconventional

1 The Palmach was the strike force of the Haganah underground resistance movement in pre-state Palestine.

2 The couple's store and workshop was founded in 1982 and moved to Pardes Hana in 1994, where it remains to this day. Hans Pallada founded the Retired Studio in 2000 which makes use of recycled tires for playgrounds.

design element was the use of cheap materials in striking colors, which corresponded to the radical designs that had started to flow in from Europe from groups like Alchimia and Archizoom whose work challenged the dull, conservative commercial design of those years. The ruling postmodern spirit of the times was so strong that someone visiting the industrial design department of Bezalel in Jerusalem's Musrara neighborhood would have sworn that they had stepped into a branch of the Italian Memphis design group.

In 1987, Sefi Hefetz and I (both of us were second year industrial design students at Bezalel), initiated a meeting with Sergio Edelstein who was the curator and owner of Artifact Gallery. This unique gallery was located inside the Red House, an industrial building on Nahmani Street in Tel Aviv. I happened to see an exhibition there at around the same time and was struck by the space, and by the possibility of using it to display some of the designs identified with Israeli culture that we had created during a course with Shmuel Kaplan, then head of the design department. Edelstein was very enthusiastic about the idea and Kaplan immediately found a budget to cover the expenses for the design of the exhibition and transport of the works. Chanan de Lange, who had just started to teach at Bezalel, was also excited by the idea and asked us to include works from the studio course he had taught on bar stools.

The exhibition mounts were made from cinderblock covered with thin sheets of white melamine used at the time in the manufacture of cheap kitchen cabinets. The colorful basic forms that had been introduced by the Italian Memphis group were on the way out, and the influence of coarser materials such as iron, concrete, corrugated metal, stone and glass on the way in. The exhibition included an armchair made in the shape of a suitcase by Ronen Kadushin and a set of bar stools by Didi Lin, Nissim Porat and Gadi Amit. This exhibition, the first in the history of Israeli design to be shown in a commercial art gallery, preceded the idea of Design Art by nearly a decade, though this breakthrough did not lead to any other design exhibitions.

Two important exhibitions in the field of Israeli design took place in 1988. Izzika Gaon organized the exhibition Bezalel Graduate, which was devoted to graphic and industrial designers who had studied at Bezalel; Meira Yagid-Haimovich organized a solo exhibition of the work of the designer Ron Arad at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Each exhibition presented a different concept of Israeli design: Gaon presented the commercial and professional works of designers, focusing on the success of professional design; whereas Yagid showed the avant-garde work of Arad as sculptural objects challenging "good design." Arad, who until then worked exclusively in England, burst onto the global scene with his daring use of materials and forms. At the end of the1980s, Arad had only just begun to penetrate the world of design, but the inventiveness and sculptural quality of his works made him a herald of new ideas. That same year, Arad taught a two-week workshop on chair design, in which I participated. During the year I also met with Alessandro Mendini, Hans Hollein, Ettore Sottsass, Daniel Weil, and Gaetano Pesce, which led to a melting pot of ideas and new radical thinking within the department.

In 1990, Ami Steinitz founded his art gallery which was devoted to the critical and unapologetic address of political and social issues. Besides showing traditional visual arts the gallery, located in Tel Aviv's Neve Zedek neighborhood, welcomed other fields, such as

architecture and design. The year the gallery opened, Steinitz organized an exhibition of works by Chanan de Lange on the writing desk. The desks were made of planks of OSB made from wood chips, combined with radio parts and light fixtures. This was the first solo exhibition of a designer in an art gallery in Israel. Another sign of the times was De Lange's solo exhibition in 1994 at the Tel Aviv Museum's Helena Rubinstein Pavilion. In 1997, Steinitz organized a group exhibition titled *Nullification* at the gallery that resulted from a series of theoretical meetings with a group of designers, among them Ami Derech, Dov Ganchrow, Vered Zikovski, Sefi Hefetz and myself. Two years later, Steinitz conducted a series of visits through the West Bank and Israel which included a visual and cultural study on the theme of the "Middle Eastern Restaurant." The designers Ziviya Sharon, Dov Ganchrow and I met with restaurant entrepreneurs on our tours through Ramallah, Hebron, and Bethlehem, where local and foreign tourism was beginning to pick up as a result of improving security conditions in the wake of the peace process.

Another gallery that started to handle design in those years was inaugurated at the Ascola School of Design in Tel Aviv, headed by Iris Paz, a designer and lecturer there. In the mid-1990s the gallery organized a series of small, quality exhibitions of works of design that drew their inspiration from Israeli "secular rituals" like "the cellphone" (in the 1990s, Israel was the country with the highest percentage of cellphones in the world), "espresso," and "the barbeque" or in its Hebrew iteration "*mangal*."

The first attempts to exhibit Israeli design in local galleries was followed by a real breakthrough with the founding of the Periscope Gallery by Sari Paran in Tel Aviv in 1997. The gallery's opening exhibition was titled *A Flat for Rent*[3] . Since then, the gallery has held over one hundred exhibitions. From its inception, Periscope became the main venue for designers working in Israel. Paran's open, pluralistic and avant-garde attitude was visible in the series of design and "neo-craft" exhibitions that included works from various fields such as ceramics, jewelry, furniture design and lighting. The existence of this singular gallery was, and remains, a miracle for the design community in Israel. Over the years I have cooperated with the gallery, as both a designer and a curator, and have much to share about this gallery's important contribution. However, unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this present essay.[4]

During what I term Slang Design's gestation period, avant-garde design and innovative research were concentrated mostly in academic institutions. The industrial design department at Bezalel had many creative breakthroughs in design, but few garnered international attention resulting in many talented young Israeli designers not reaching their full potential. The Israeli commercial market was still in its infancy and most of the work for designers was, and today still remains, in the fields of military, medical and hi-tech product development, exhibition design and interior design.

3 *A Flat for Rent* is the title of a popular Hebrew children's book by author Leah Goldberg.
4 *Periscope, Contemporary Israeli Design*, ed. Avi Lubin (Tel Aviv 2011) [Hebrew].

The Big Breakthrough (2000–2015)

Toward the end of the 1990s, Israeli designers tried to break into the international scene. In April 1998, during Milan Design Week, curator Marva Griffin launched Salone del Mobile in order to promote young non-commercial design. Inside a giant domed structure located in Milan's old fairground, Griffin erected one hundred small makeshift booths using simple MDF board and cloth. For the first time two Israeli designers, Tal Gur and Ayala Serfaty, were invited to participate. Gur showed works made from plastic in aluminum foil molds using a rotation process (a method he originated for his final project for Bezalel) and Serfaty showed light fixtures made of crumpled silk fabric. That year, Ami Derech, a designer and lecturer at Bezalel and I visited design week in Milan for the first time in order to see about organizing an exhibition of the work of Bezalel graduates.[5]

At Milan design week in April 2000, a few parallel events featuring Israeli designers seemed to signal the beginning of a breakthrough. That year, Ami Derech and I organized a booth at Salone del Mobile featuring works by young Bezalel industrial design department graduates, including Assa Ashuach and Marit Meisler. At the same time, Ayala Serfaty was showing her works in a solo exhibition in downtown Milan. The exhibition, under the brand name Aqua Creations, comprised a large collection of new lighting that received much attention. That same year Yaacov Kaufman showed a series of table lamps and ceiling lighting in the Lumina booth, an Italian lighting manufacturer, and he also participated in the group exhibition, titled *Yalla Design*, together with Chanan de Lange and Tal Gur. The wonderful reception of the Israeli designers' work led to a thirst for more. That same year I was among the finalists for New York Times Magazine's one thousand year time capsule design competition for my design of an 800 gallon oil container.

The following year, in 2001, a group of Israeli designers was invited to participate in an exhibition organized by Vanni Pasca and the designer Eli Rosenberg, a graduate of Bezalel who was living in Italy. The exhibition, which was held in Verona, featured designers prominent in the local scene in Israel, such as Pini Leibovich, Eilon Armon and Raviv Lifshitz. The exhibition referenced important exhibitions that had taken place in Israel: *Re-use organized* by curator Arie Berkowitz and *Improvisation*, organized by Iris Paz at the Ascola Gallery. Two years later, following the success of the first exhibition, Berkowitz and Paz organized another identical exhibition with Nirith Nelson in Verona that featured many Israeli designers. In 2002, Nelson organized the group exhibition *Domains: Contemporary Israeli Design* which was first shown at design week in Tokyo, with the support of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Over the next two years, the exhibition traveled to venues throughout East Asia. In 2003, curator Sophia Dekel organized the exhibition *The Israeli Project* focusing on local Israeli design at the Haifa Museum and the Jerusalem Artists' House.

In 2001, I contacted the author and theoretician Mel Byars to invite him to the opening of an exhibition I had organized at the Bezalel Gallery in Tel Aviv and to a lecture series on contemporary design around the world. Byars' visit to Israel was a landmark event in Israeli

5 At the time I was the head of the industrial design department at Bezalel.

design. He visited the studios of various designers and Periscope Gallery, driven from place to place on the back of, Bezalel professor, Ami Derech's motor scooter. Impressed by the Israeli design scene, he called it "the best kept secret." On that visit Byars became Israeli design's world ambassador. He included Israeli designers in his new books, reviewed Israeli designers' work in articles and books, and facilitated connections between Israeli designers and manufacturers. Byars decided to move to Tel Aviv. He taught at Bezalel and the Holon Institute of Technology, and even wrote the book *Improvisation*, published by Tel Aviv University Press.

The success of Israeli design abroad continued to gain momentum through the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. The Felissimo Design House opened in New York, which showcased the work of Israeli designers. The Holon Art Gallery opened in 2003 and the gallery's curator Arie Berkowitz organized a number of design exhibitions at the Tel Aviv Artists' House. That same year Orna Peleg and I founded the satellite Salone Tel Aviv which showed contemporary Israeli design during the annual commercial home design fair.[6] In 2004, I established the Phenomenology Group, which included seven recent graduates of Bezalel's industrial design department. The group held two exhibitions in Israel and at Salone del Mobile, Milan.

An important milestone for me personally was the exhibition of the series of occasional tables titled "New Baghdad" in the Edra flagship store in Milan in 2005. The launch provided global exposure for my own strong political statement as an Israeli designer. The same year I participated with other Israeli designers including Galya Rosenfeld in the exhibition *Safe: Design Takes on Risk* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York curated by Paola Antonelli. Bezalel's development unit headed by Yaron Reshef and Uri Alon exhibited a series of civilian gas masks for civilians, highlighting the connection between design and the security situation in Israel. The next year, Ellen Lupton and I organized an exhibition on Israeli design at the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York. The idea for the exhibition came up by chance at a meeting with the museum's chief curator Barbara Bloemink who had invited me to present a design installation on the museum's first floor. After the initial meeting in the space, we went downstairs to the basement to meet with the installation staff. I jokingly asked her if she would ever consider exhibiting Israeli design in the basement and she replied in all seriousness that if I could make the space work, she would be happy to take me up on the idea; hence, the first exhibition of Israeli design opened in January 2006 in the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum in New York as part of the centenary celebrations commemorating the founding of Bezalel.

The 2007 exhibition *Dream Makers: Design Meets Technology* organized by Alex Ward, curator of design at the Israel Museum, explored the connection between Israeli high-tech and nontraditional design. In cooperation with the Israeli company Object, which had developed a new type of 3-D laser printer, 50 Israeli designers were invited to propose ideas for how laser print technology could expand the language of design. Alas, the exhibition was ahead of its time and did not travel to any other venues. In 2005 the industrialist Sami Sagol founded the pioneering project d-Vision, which annually recruits twelve of Israel's top

6 With the assistance of designer Elad Klein, who passed away in 2006.

industrial design graduates into its ranks. The group developed commercial products for companies like Keter Plastics and at the same time presented conceptual projects at Salone del Mobile in 2008, 2010 and 2012. The group exhibited their lighting designs at Eindhoven in 2009 during Dutch Design Week.

In 2008, Alon Razgour organized an exhibition of Israeli design at the Design Center in Marseille, and two years later in Toronto. The same year, during Design Basel, I had a solo exhibition at the Peter Neuman Gallery. It was the first year that Art Basel Miami decided to show design art. Around the same time other Israeli designers had begun to break into the international arena. Shai Alkalay exhibited a chest of drawers called "Stack" for Established & Sons, which immediately drew attention in Milan. The same year, Chanan de Lange had a solo exhibition at Noblesse Gallery in Toronto, and works of mine were shown at Rosanna Orlandi Gallery in Milan.

One of the most significant events for the Israeli design scene was the establishment of the Design Museum Holon. In 2003, the director-general of the Holon Municipality Hana Hertzman formed a steering committee tasked with transforming the abandoned city library building into a museum for design. Daniel Charny, a Bezalel design graduate and then lecturer at the Royal College of Art in London, was asked to prepare the program. He was in favor of the construction of a new building next to the Mediatheque. A library of materials and a design center for organizing annual conferences was established in the Mediatheque and the museum, designed by the offices of Ron Arad in London, opened in 2010. The museum's inaugural exhibition, *The State of Things*, was curated by Barbara Bloemink, with Julie Lasky, Aric Chen, and Gareth Walker. Over the course of the next five years, the museum organized a series of exhibitions connecting Israeli design to the international scene. Galit Gaon, the director and curator of the museum, brought in guest curators to further broaden the impact of design in Israel. Holon is one of the few cities in the world to have a design museum, but it was not until 2015 that Israeli designer Yaacov Kaufman was given a solo exhibition. The question remains whether the show will travel to other museums around the world and whether the museum will organize similar solo exhibitions of Israeli designers in the future.

The presence of the Design Museum Holon highlighted the dearth of spaces for exhibiting design in Israel. In 2010, Anat Benvenisti founded the Paradigma Gallery for which I organized 12 exhibitions. Among them were solo exhibitions of Willy Mizrachi, Yaacov Kaufmann and Chanan de Lange and group exhibitions with Israeli designers such as Yael Mer, David Amar and Yoav Reches. As a commercial gallery for manufactured design, Paradigma was a fascinating opportunity to study the state of Israeli design in relation to the growing community of design collectors. At that time a group of young designers became active in the commercial field with design stores like Soho, Asufa and various Israeli museum shops. At the same time, Gal Gaon founded the Talents Design Studio, which tried to advance commercial design manufacturers and exhibit their work in prominent design events around the world. Since 2010, there have been many more Israeli design events both in Israel and around the world, such as the exhibition *How To* organized by curators Liora Razin and Nitzan Debbie in 2013 and 2014, in Shanghai and Tokyo, respectively. In 2015, a unique design exhibition opened at the David Citadel Museum in Jerusalem titled *Objective* which focused on the local

Israeli landscape in the field of design. The show, curated by Smadar Keren, featured works by Haim Parnas and myself that dealt with the fundamental question of Israeli culture as a source for Israeli design.

In recent years, it is Israeli designers living and working outside of Israel that have set the tone, chief among them Ron Gilad, David Amar, Dror Ben-Shitrit, and Arik Levy.

Discussion of all the events since the start of the new millennium, listing of all the designers, curators, reviewers, critics, and supporters of Israeli design today, examining the design scene connected to the world of Israeli high tech, which is one of the largest social, cultural and financial phenomena in the world, are beyond the scope of this essay.

Israeli design does not fall short in the academic world, and in the few instances when student and graduate work has been exhibited in the framework of design weeks in Milan, London, Tokyo or Eindhoven, the Israeli group has stood out in terms of its quality and maturity. However, it seems that the scene is in need of an infusion of new energy. In order for the work of original Israeli design to continue to flourish the list of desiderata must include: a serious designer-in-residence program, the establishment of commercial galleries to develop the collectors market for design, museums that will initiate exhibitions of Israeli designers, produce catalogues and books and programs to encourage the creation of design along the lines of what already exists for the fields of film and the visual arts. The next few decades hold the promise of exciting new possibilities for designers with a global market, that is now closer than ever. Alongside these aspirations there is a need for a deeper and wider theoretical exploration to define the unique features of Israeli design. One of these is the link between the Hebrew language and the way designers think and express themselves, and in particular Hebrew slang.

Slang Design as Decoder of Language

In order to characterize Israeli design in this new age it is best to use parallels found in contemporary Hebrew slang. I see a comparison between Israeli design language and Hebrew slang, the essence stems from the perception of slang not only as a nonconformist and creative language but mainly as a language of the illegitimate. The ubiquitous use of Hebrew slang by both Israeli children and migrants cannot be compared to the use of standard language. The role of slang is to differentiate: culturally, by generation, status, ethnicity, and sometimes by profession.

There are fascinating parallels between a spoken language and a local design language. Slang uses the "ready-made," taking a word used in a professional context and using it out of context; in the same way design will make use of a functional object out of context. Just as slang seeks to shock, defy, challenge, isolate and consolidate a social identity, so does design. The use of slang involves nonconformist concepts associated with ethnicity, racism, degradation on the basis of gender and extremist religious or political contexts, whereas in design it entails the use of unsuitable or inappropriate materials, a defiant aesthetic, loaded imagery, the breaking of conventions or the disrupting of identification. Slang is a prominent expression of diverse

populations within a society that want to disrupt its internal order; think of the criminal slang: "let me take care of extending your living room," meant as a threat to throw a grenade into someone's house.

The language of design does not have a standard as does a regular language. The rules of a language became fixed because of the constant need to maintain consistent communication. However, elements within the field of design are closer in their essence to the meaning of standard because they define as the norm the various uses of function, shape and material that determine symbols, signs and clear modes of identification for a culture and a society.

Israeli Slang Design in some respects evokes a number of expressions in common use in local slang. As we will see, much of it derives from army slang. Israel's militaristic culture has a decisive impact on the shaping of the Israeli adolescent identity, on the character of its society and culture, and thus also its design. Israeli society is also greatly influenced by the variety within the 21st century global culture. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to attribute distinctive features to works of local design. It is impossible to examine this based on one particular work, rather one must consider the broad phenomena among the cohort of Israeli designers.

Meshuftsar (Enhanced) Design

"*Shiftsarti* (I enhanced) the vest so that it can fit twice as many bullet cartridges and grenades, and even a pocket for a candy bar"; design that largely derives from improvising and enhancing an existing product. The Israeli designer does not perceive a finished product as the end game but rather as the beginning. The phenomenon of improvisation-enhancement explains the prevailing tendency among Israeli designers to use ready-made materials. Most Israeli designers have used and use ready-made materials as a key component in their work, with the essential difference between ready-made in art and in design being the designer's aspiration to invalidate the object's original functionality and equip it with a new one. Cardboard boxes, tires, garbage cans, headlights, wooden pallets, recycled aluminum siding, leftover pieces of plastic, are some of the many types of objects that have been reclaimed in the designer's studio through the process of *shiftsur* and *iltur* (enhancement and improvisation). Even though the concept of using the ready-made object did not originate in Israel,[7] Israeli designers prefer not to create a new object from scratch but prefer *leshafster [inf.]*, to improvise an existing one. The existing object is usually charged with meaning that derives from its former environment or context, and the process of *shiftsur [n.]*, improvisation-enhancement charges it with a new, sometimes contradictory meaning or accentuates the meaning it carried previously. This category includes objects that, at their source, may be a cross between species (so to speak), mutations made from new connections, hybrids or grafts.

The culture of *shiftsur* or improvisation-enhancement derives from not taking anything for granted, and not recognizing any authority, including that of the object itself, in the spirit

7 For example, the Italian designer Achille Castiglione who used a tractor chair in his design for a chair or a car headlight in a household object.

of the Talmudic dictum "see and sanctify." This secular approach to the object is expressed in continually changing something for the purpose of improving and enhancing it. Rather than respect for tradition, this approach questions the "suitability" or inherent "sense" of an object and tries to make it better, cleverer. This is a culture that has contempt for conservatism and class division.

Metchukmak (Sloppy) Design

"Soldier, what is this *tchikmuk* (n. sloppiness) here? Don't you know how to join the male connector to the female connector?"; design whose overall look appears as sloppy due to irregular use of joints; design that produces improvised combinations that do not fit together in a clear and logical way and that contains parts that have no firm basis in the overall design.

The appeal of the *tchikmuk* or sloppy design, derives from the fact that the improvised joint shows the designer's working process, enabling the viewer to decipher how it was put together from start to finish. Whereas clean joints entail hidden processes, sloppy design does not hide anything, but instead proudly displays its improvisation through its crude manipulation of material and simple mechanics. These kinds of joints are made by a deliberate cut down the middle, creating a geometric joint, by embedding of some other type of part, a joint using wires or the threading of rope, the use of handcuffs, special adhesives, unexpected welding, unraveling of parts and reattaching them to another part, pushing one part with force so that it twists or spreads itself out and stays put through the application of pressure, and so forth. All these examples highlight the tendency to emphasize the temporary nature of the connections between the parts and to experience the momentary and the fleeting.

The culture of *tchikmuk*, sloppy design derives from quick response time, a lack of patience for more thorough and time consuming processes, a desire to emphasize imperfection, an innate opposition to perfectionism and questioning of the conceit behind designing an object so perfectly that will eventually be thrown in the garbage.

Mesmurtat (Wrinkled, Tattered or Worn) Design

"I woke up for guard duty with my shirt all wrinkled (*mesmurtat*) and just then the base commander passed by and put me in detention"; design whose overall appearance is like a piece of wrinkled fabric or surface that is worn or scratched. Irregular manufacturing processes yield uneven surfaces creating an aesthetic out of the very fact of their uniqueness, which in turn make them incapable of being replicated. These processes derive from improvisation through construction of the form of an object by using unconventional tools, such as sewn tarpaulins used to cast concrete, aluminum sheets used to rotate plastic, reclaimed wooden planks to cast plastic, rumpled fabric, scratched or rusted pieces of sheet metal.

The wrinkled, tattered and worn design culture stems from rejection of the sparkly and the shiny, the smooth and the perfect. The biblical heroes were flawed and made mistakes and therefore, the pristine is an anathema to Israeli nature (as opposed to the Japanese or the German cultures, for example). In addition, the culture of the country and of the army, which

sees itself as superior to the normative bourgeois-urban culture, bequeathed an aesthetic of dress and design that glorifies the simple, the straightforward and the real.

Munfatz (Made-Up) Design

"No going home or nothing, it's all *hanfatsah* (made up) by a sick SGM"T (Hebrew slang, [not acronym], for young overly eager army officers)"; design that is not related to reality, out of context and bases itself on hypothetical grounds. The main influence of the *munfatz* or made-up design trend is reflected in creating an outlandish scenario for an object that is based on a literal concept. Many projects will be based on puns like *"ta'am lepgam"* (meaning proof of inadequacy). The basic definition of the human being as an unfinished creation, whose repair is undertaken by a created being, embodies a kind of responsibility that does not exist in determinist thought anywhere in the world. The idea of the responsibility of personal repair by the individual gives the human being power and a sense of self-importance relative to what is said and what is not said. Many projects of Slang Design base themselves on philosophical and theological ideas. Design that is *munfatz* will also have a tendency toward the over-didactic, and sometimes also of variations on a single motif.

The culture of *hanfatsa* derives from the Jewish sources in which the logical and the illogical exist in tandem. The rational and the irrational are not opposites but parallel currents that enable one to experience reality in a more holistic way and thus enable a person to make rational and religious-mystical remarks in the same sentence.

Mevurdak (Disorderly, Messy, Chaotic) Design

"That company commander, he can't think without being surrounded by disorder"; design that deconstructs organized structures into unstructured elements and creates an asymmetric aesthetic that draws from geometric chaos. What gave legitimacy to the disorderly was the deconstructivist movement in architecture which, in the late 1980s, drew its inspiration from theorists of literature and semiotics. This influence was translated into an aesthetic of messy piles, agglomerated structures lacking order and the disorderly proliferation of similar parts. The disorderly culture is one that understands that order does not exist in reality and does not reflect it. The echo of the chaos within reality is the ability to live naturally amidst a chaotic situation that has no top and no bottom, no orderly lines and no outward meaning.

Metuktak ("Tiptop," or "Precise") Design

"We walked into the [command] post and everything there was tiptop, like NATO"; *metuktak* design uses the latest technology to organize things in new and amazing ways. Israeli design works closely with advanced technology, in the fields of military engineering, medicine and agriculture, among many others. In the plastics industry, they have leveraged the *metuktak* design ethos in the design of tool boxes (in companies like Keter, ZAG Stanley), hydration backpacks (Shoresh), and camera bags (Kata Bags). In non-traditional design, these

things were sometimes translated into using advanced technology materials such as complex materials (carbon fiber), the newest plastic composites and aluminum profiles.

The tiktuk culture stems from admiration of invention, concept, and innovation. Israeli designers do not like to deal only with refining details. Every product or item must offer something dramatic and radical.

There are many more types of design on the list of slang Israeli design culture, but their discussion must wait for another time.

Israeli Design, Where to Now?

The year 2015 was characterized by a flurry of unfocused activity. Many graduates from Israeli academic design programs are making headway in the "design making" field. Cutbacks in Israeli industry has resulted in the need to initiate smaller design-rich businesses, while the internet has made breaking into the global markets much easier. The relatively easy approach to the big design events in Europe, Asia and America offers new opportunities for an entire generation of designers living in the age of social networking. But is there a unique direction here that will grab the attention of the international community?

Back in the 1990s, it was mainly Dutch design, in particular the Droog Design group, with generous support from the Dutch government, that attracted the world's attention with its new theoretical concept of design. The dominance of the Dutch has begun to recede and with the exception of a few flickers of interest coming from Eastern Europe and Asia, at present there is no new up and coming talent. Israeli design continues the tradition of its founders, but it seems as if its momentum has come to a standstill in the last three years. Israeli designers hardly show at Milan Design Week, while only a few designers living in Europe or America have managed to secure a place in the design industry. The field of Design Art which seemed promising a few years ago was a commercial failure and design collectors still only number a handful in comparison to the number of art collectors. The wave of young Israeli design makers can still become an influential cultural phenomenon if certain conditions occur simultaneously: public support for their work and its dissemination (similar to the government supported Israel Film Fund and the Israeli film industry), cultural support for designers' work through museum exhibitions, the establishment of commercial galleries for design, and encouragement of the collecting of design, publicity through the publication of books and articles in magazines and journals, blogs and all other international media platforms. The young generation feel the international pulse. They travel abroad frequently and with exchange programs, both students and teachers can reside abroad for extended periods where they are exposed firsthand to all the latest developments in the world of theory and practice. We must not miss the opportunity to make the most out of the tremendous potential that exists in the field and the readiness of the design scene in Israel. Design is an international language that can build bridges and connect the thriving, nonconformist Israeli culture with any place in the world notwithstanding its geo-political difficulties.