

Sukkah of Peace

Content Outline



Activity Flow:

Presenting the Holiday and Opening Discussion (10 minutes):

- Ask participants: "Try to remember Sukkot celebrations throughout your life. What significant or special moment do you recall? What made this memory meaningful?"
- Allow several participants to share their memories.
- Present information about Sukkot:
- "The sukkah is also called a 'Sukkah of Peace,' symbolizing peace throughout the world. Sitting in the sukkah reminds us of the peaceful period of Israel in its land, when they sat 'each man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid' (Micah 4:4). The sukkah embodies hope and expectation that peace will dwell forever among all inhabitants of the world. Sukkot unites opposites: between permanence and temporariness, between joy of harvest and concern for rain, and between the Exodus from Egypt and settlement in the land. The sukkah itself symbolizes shelter and home, but also openness and exposure. It's a symbol of equality and inviting guests. The 'Sukkah of Peace' is a symbol that teaches about the various aspects of the holiday and allows us to examine the possibility of creating islands of peace in reality, even if they are temporary."
- Emphasize the central values of the holiday: temporariness, hospitality, unity, and peace.

Group Work on Art Pieces (15 minutes):

- Divide into 4 groups (at least 6 participants in each group).
- Give each group:
 - a. A poster of one of the artworks,
 - b. A relevant Israeli poem excerpt.
- Guide the groups to discuss the following questions:
 1. What does the artwork tell? What kind of sukkah do you see?
 2. What's the optimal sukkah in your eyes? What would you hang in it?
 3. Where and when do you think the sukkah in the poster was created?
Which holiday values are reflected in it?
 4. Ask participants to find a quote from the scriptures/poem/song/or anything personal that relates to the art piece.

Creation: Sukkah Model Building Competition (10 minutes):

- Hold a competition between the 4 groups to build the most welcoming, beautiful, and homely sukkah, or one that best incorporates the holiday's values.
- Provide each group with craft materials (straws/matches/natural materials) or the option to draw.
- Encourage creativity and thinking about the holiday's values during the building process.

In-depth Discussion about the Artworks and Artists (10 minutes):

- Distribute to each group an information sheet about the artist who created their sukkah: [Info about the artists and the artwork below].
- Guide the groups to discuss:
 1. Did learning about the artist change your understanding of the artwork?
 2. Which aspects of the artist's words resonate with you? Which are difficult to digest?
- General discussion on topics such as evacuees, temporariness, home, and hospitality, and the Jewish journey.
- You can discuss questions like: How do all these connect to the Israeli story of evacuees? Does Sukkot have a different meaning for Jews in the diaspora?

Ushpizin and Role Play (8 minutes):

- Explain the Ushpizin custom:

"Ushpizin is a custom of symbolically welcoming guests into the sukkah. According to tradition, each night of Sukkot, a spiritual guest – an important biblical figure – is invited to the sukkah. The seven traditional Ushpizin are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David. The custom emphasizes the value of hospitality."
- Ask: "If you could invite any Ushpizin of your choice, who would you choose and why?"
- Guide the groups to imagine that the artist they learned about is coming to their sukkah:
 1. Ask them to draft an invitation letter to the artist.
 2. Guide them to create and present a short dialogue (2 minutes) with the artist.

Summary and Online Activity (2 minutes):

- Ask participants to photograph the sukkah models they created next to the artist's poster.
- Encourage them to upload the photos to social media with the tags:
@zionistenterprises | #TenDaysOfHope.
- Summarize the activity by highlighting the main customs of the holiday and the significance of the Four Species.



SHELTER IN PEACE / SUKKAT SHALOM

Artists: Gal Cohen, Bat El Elfasi, Mor Peled, Deborah Wasserman

Curated by Aya Goshen

In collaboration with LABA: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture, The Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, and The World Zionist Organization/JCCA / ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית



SHELTER IN PEACE / SUKKAT SHALOM is a collaborative art project that unites artists to create works that will be transformed into a Sukkah. Two artists from the Gaza envelope, Bat El Elfasi and Mor Peled, and two from the Jewish community in New York City, Gal Cohen and Deborah Wasserman, were invited to envision and construct the Sukkah together. Each artist was given a wall to design.

Over the course of a week, the four artists participated in a program and engaged in a shared creative journey, collaborating closely and working side by side in a shared studio. Each brought her unique medium, technique, and style to craft a wall, resulting in a multifaceted work that combines collage, mixed media, painting, digital imagery, and photography. The Hebrew phrase סוכת שלום (Sukkat Shalom), meaning 'shelter in peace,' embodies a sense of safety and protection. In response to the need for hope in a year marked by unprecedented challenges, this project offers a safe space to bear witness while also encouraging openness and dialogue within our community.



SHELTER IN PEACE / SUKKAT SHALOM

An Art Collaboration



Artists: (Right to left) Mor Peled,
Gal Cohen, Bat El Elfasi,
Deborah Wasserman
Curated by Aya Goshen

Deborah Wasserman

BIO

Deborah Wasserman was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, grew up in Tel Aviv, Israel, and currently resides in Queens, New York, one of the most diverse counties in the US. She is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts, the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, Artists in the Marketplace at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and received two fellowships from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She has exhibited in the United States, at the Queens Museum of the Arts, Bronx Museum of the Arts, White Columns, Pierogi 2000, Socrates Sculpture Park, Jonathan Ferrara Gallery, and A.I.R. Gallery. Internationally, she has shown in Brazil, the Netherlands, Germany, and Israel. Wasserman has been the recipient of grants from the Experimental Television Center, Aljira Center for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York State Department of Cultural Affairs, The Puffin Foundation, Queens Council On The Arts, and the Citizens Committee for New York. In 2020 she was a Finalist for the NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in the category of Printmaking/ Drawing/Book Arts. Most recently, Wasserman was commissioned by the New York City Department of Transportation to create a public art piece.



About the work “The Fallen Sukkah”

When sketching ideas for my painting, I contemplated a Sukkah, a temporary dwelling, or a shelter. This dwelling was built during the Sukkot holiday to commemorate the sheltering of the Israelites in the wilderness. The Sukkah is made in such a permeable way, that its dwellers can connect with heaven and earth, the stars visible through the roof of palm fronds, and while in the Sukkah we eat fruits, given to us by the earth, symbolizing the fall harvest. I was thinking about a Sukkah as a ‘softer’ version of a permanent, stone house; as a dwelling that signifies temporality and a certain vulnerability to the elements (rain, storm). My painting speaks about a damaged structure that was abruptly and violently dismantled, its palms ripped apart. Hands holding the Etrog merge, in a futile attempt to perform the festive ritual. This evokes the tragic events of October 7th as a collective trauma that has shaken us all and ripped our metaphorical Sukkah apart.

This painting expresses our suffering and the yearning for us to emerge stronger from this storm, to use our hands, minds, and hearts to realign, respond, and rebuild. Even though we were completely shaken, and experienced such unimaginable losses, we will move forward with a sense of unity, whole and free.

Bat El Elfasi

BIO

Bat El Elfasi (b. 1991) is an Israeli artist and a graduate of the Fine Arts Department at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. Her artistic practice centers on environmental sculpture and painting, reflecting a deep engagement with space and form. Currently, she serves as the Director of the Bezalel Excellence Center in Ofakim, where she also teaches sculpture and mentors students on their final projects. In addition to her work as an artist, Elfasi holds a Master’s degree in Art Therapy and practices as an art therapist in “Resilience Centers” across Israel’s southern and central regions.



About the work “Displaced/עקורים”

As a member of a displaced and wounded community in Ofakim, Israel, I created this piece to reflect the deep pain and loss we have experienced. The events of October 7th and the ongoing war have shattered our homes and communities, leaving us with fractured identities and uncertain futures. In my mixed-media work, I incorporated the yellow stripe, inspired by the symbol of the hostages, as a powerful emblem of both hope and despair. I also used pieces of mirrors to reflect the fragmented identities we are currently facing. Through this work, I aim to convey the struggle of navigating an unstable new reality while holding on to the hope of rebuilding and healing.

Gal Cohen

BIO

Gal Cohen (b. 1986, Tel Aviv) is a NYC based visual artist, living and working in Washington Heights. Gal works primarily in the painting and drawing fields, incorporating mixed media and printmaking techniques in her 2D works. Cohen earned her MFA in Fine Arts at Parsons School of Design (2018) and her BFA in Fine Arts at Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem (2009). Among the exhibitions Cohen has participated in are: Spring/Break Art Show 2023, Fresh Paint Art Fair 2023, 'Queer Calling' at All Street Gallery 2023, NYC, Spring Break Art Show 2022, The Bronx Museum of the Arts (2021), The United Palace, NY (2022), Collar Works, Troy, NY (2021), Laurie M. Tisch Gallery, NY (2021), Arlington Arts Center, VA, 2020, Bric Gallery, Brooklyn 2019, Fresh Paint Art Fair, TLV, Israel (2020), Clemente Art Center, NY (2018), Spring/Break Art Show (2018), Westbeth Gallery NY (2018). Cohen is a member artist and a former artist in residence at Cornerstone Studios (NYC), a Scholarship Artist at Manhattan Graphic Center studios, a recent alumni of AIM fellowship at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and a Chashama artist in residence for 2019–2020.



About the work “Intertwined”

The painting I created is based on an intuitive sketch depicting a geometric form of a home—a shelter—with two figures intertwined within it. This imagery reflects my belief that achieving true peace in Israel/Palestine requires a deep understanding that the futures of Israelis and Palestinians are intertwined. One cannot live in peace and security without the other’s

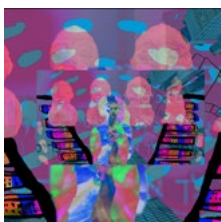
freedom, and vice versa.

When Nina Simone was asked, “What is freedom for you?” she responded, “No fear.” To this, I would add courage—the courage to imagine a better future for our children and to envision a land that can hold both people, rather than one they must die for. As peace activists Maoz Inon and Aziz Abu Sarah say, “Hope is an action.” Imagining a better future for our children is an action, and that is the least I can do these days.

Mor Peled

BIO

Born in 1990 in Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak, Mor Peled is a multidisciplinary artist and lecturer at the Midrasha School of Art, Beit Berl Academic College. Specializing in video, sculpture, and 3D printing, she is known for her exploration of the intersections between art, life, technology, and the interplay between human and machine actions. Mor holds a Bachelor’s degree in Art and Education from the Midrasha (2019) and a Master’s degree in Industrial Design with a focus on Technology. She is currently pursuing a PhD at Bar-Ilan University in the Department of Science, Technology, and Social Studies.



About the work “Both/גם וגם”

[Link to video](#)

My work merges images I collected and created during my time in New York with those I had been working on earlier in Israel, resulting in an animated-style video art. The background song and accompanying text in the video—“Many days have passed, yet I find myself saying the same things to you day after day”—are drawn from a blessing my

mother wrote for my Bat Mitzvah.

This intuitive fusion of the personal and the collective—embodied through the places, images, sounds, and texts in my work—reflects the complex emotions I’ve been grappling

with since October 7th. On that dark Saturday, terrorists infiltrated Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak, where I was born and have lived my entire life with my immediate and extended family. While we were all under attack that day, and thankfully my family managed to come through safely, our sense of home and safety has been deeply shaken. The kibbutz has suffered casualties, including the loss of some very close friends. My family and I had to flee our homes and are still displaced.

My work expresses a personal mix of profound emotions that nearly reaches the point of numbness—grief blended with gratitude for life, a sense of being uprooted alongside the warm embrace of community and family, and a strong, renewed desire for life and togetherness born from the deepest fear of death.

Aya Goshen | Art Curator



BIO

Aya Goshen, an independent art curator based in New York City, originally from Israel, explores immigrant experiences and amplifies underrepresented or forgotten voices. She holds an MA in Contemporary Art from Sotheby's Institute of Art New York and an MBA in marketing from Tel Aviv University. Highlighted exhibitions in her curation include Reviving Venus by Gal Cohen and Luciana Pinchiero at SPRING/BREAK Art Show (New York, 2022), Floating Walls, a group exhibition by Dana Levy, Gal Cohen, Lee Tal, Michal Geva, Naomi Safran-Hon, Noa Charuvi, and Zac Hacmon presented at The Laurie M. Tisch Gallery (New York, 2022), A Tribute to Leah, a participatory dinner by Maya Yadid (New York, 2021), Growing a Garden for an Unknown Lover by Boaz Aharonovitch at ZAZ10TS, (New York, 2019), CAN'T LET GO, a solo exhibition by Sivan Dayan at Sotheby's Institute of Art (New York, 2018), and Transient Land by Michal Geva at the 14th Street Y (New York, 2018).